Atari Coleco Intellivision Computers Vectrex Arcade

Classic Gamer Magazine

Premiere Issue

Fall 1999 www.classicgamer.com U.S.

"Because Newer Isn't Necessarily Better!"

Special Report:
Classic Videogames at E3

Monkeying Around
Revisiting Donkey Kong

Game Reviews:
Atari, Intellivision, etc...

Lost Arcade Classic:
Warp Warp

Deep Thaw
Chris Lion Rediscovers His Atari

Plus!
- Latest News
- Guide to Halloween Games
- Win the book, "Phoenix"

“As long as you enjoy the system you own and the software made for it, there’s no reason to mothball your equipment just because its manufacturer’s stock dropped.”

- Arnie Katz, Editor of Electronic Games Magazine, 1984

In the beginning Nolan said,

"Let there be Pong".

So there was Pong.

Nolan saw that
Pong was good.

And so did we.....

Classic Gamer Magazine

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Fall 1999

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SPECIAL THANKS
To Sarah. Thank you for all your help and encouragement. I love you!

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1st Issue Dedication

To my Mom and Dad who fed my videogame addiction with an endless supply of cartridges (and accessories). Also, to my mom who had a never ending quest to obtain the family high Pac-Man score and who would consistently panic when the Beetles raced towards her in Lady Bug. To my dad who could never quite get the hang of any of the games but would play anyway and be a good sport about it when we blew him away at Warlords.

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Reset

by
Chris Cavanaugh

Here's to Katz, Kunkel and Worley!

In the early 80's I always looked forward to the next issue of "Electronic Games Magazine." Month after month the anticipation of waiting for the latest edition would nearly kill me. There was no greater feeling at the time than seeing the new issue on the magazine rack at my local Long's Drugstore. Arnie Katz, Bill Kunkel and Joyce Worley delivered, without fail, an informative, entertaining and fun-to-read magazine. After the great video game shake-out in the mid-80's, Electronic Games released their final issue. Sadly, it was the end of an era.

As a video game player, the mid-80's was a dark time. Atari was a shell of its former self, Activision started producing computer games in order to survive, and the words "video game cartridges" became obscene words in the hard hit retail sector. After Nintendo and Sega reinvented the home video gaming industry and the Internet started to explode, people began remembering their gaming roots. We dragged our Atari 2600's out of attics and basements, dusted off our Colecovisions, and once again cursed at our Intellivision controllers (and wished we had kept our Vectrex system!). The magic seemed to be back for us. But it never really left, did it? We just temporarily stored it away.

Once again we manned tanks in Combat and became Star Raiders. We swore along with Q*Bert, swung from vines with Pitfall Harry, and wondered if we could still earn those Activision patches. "Doom and Quake who?" We even paid Pac-Man and E.T. a return visit on the VCS (although, understandably, probably not for very long.)

On the Internet we found we weren't alone. "Finally! Someone who understands my quest for game cartridges and lost systems!" Now we trade, sell and auction our classic favorites freely on the World Wide Web (and keep each other in line to make sure that we aren't ripping each other off!) We scour the flea markets digging through dusty boxes and when passing a garage sale we can't help but think, "I wonder if there are any rare cartridges there?" Of course, when we're done searching and weary from the day's hunt we log back on to the Internet and brag of our rare finds or missed opportunities to envious and sympathetic ears.

Since the fun is back in playing these classics we thought it only wise to publish a magazine dedicated to the games of yore. Whether you are a hardcore collector, casual hobbyist or just like to play a game of Asteroids every now and again we hope you find this magazine fun, informative, and entertaining. Inside you'll find news, reviews, humor, opinion columns, where to find the best classic gaming websites, and of course, "The Legend of BIRA BIRA."

While our magazine can only hope to achieve the greatness of Katz, Kunkel and Worley's "Electronic Games," we hope you enjoy this first issue of Classic Gamer Magazine.

-Chris Cavanaugh
Editor-in-Chief

CGM

Raves 'n Rants

Got something to say?
Mail us at: Classic Gamer Magazine
7770 Regents Rd.
#113-293, San Diego,
CA 92122

Last August we released the "Fanzine Edition" of Classic Gamer Magazine and asked for your comments, complaints, and general ramblings. (It would appear we were somewhat of a hit!)

Are we 2/3 or 3/8?

Got the (fanzine) issue last night and was better than expected.

By far the most professional and informative fanzine that I have read on the retorogaming scene. Better than several "professional" gaming mags that I sometimes pick up. I am currently trying to collect a complete run of the original Electronic Games and Video Game magazines and enjoyed the opening editorial. I think you succeeded in capturing at least a fraction of those great mags.

- Jeremy Abig, via e-mail

>Blush< Thanks for the kind words, Jeremy. They are always appreciated. However, we are intent on upping our fractional standing with you. We're sure with some hard work we can achieve at least a 9/10 standing.

Ape Hallucinating

I really tripped out (in a good way) on the Donkey Kong article and was glad to see that others know all those specific details that differentiate an arcade/Atari/ Coleco/etc...game! It's a great idea for a 'zine and I am looking forward to any future issues.

- Luke, via e-mail

Thanks Luke. We liked the Donkey Kong article so much we reprinted it in this issue (as well as a few others from the original edition).

Sacred Bovines!

Holy Cow! Holy Good Golly. Classic Gamer Magazine is right on the money. I am impressed and so should all the people who receive this incredible publication.

I looked through it a couple times and I missed any subscription info. What is cost, frequency... basically how does one subscribe? I definitely want a subscription.

VERY WELL DONE. Keep up the great work.

- Don Thomas,
curator@icwhen.com

Thanks Don!

Good news! Starting this issue we are now offering subscriptions. We'll be publishing every three months from this point forward. *See page 45 for all the gory details.*

And the Smartass Award goes to:

Dear Classic Gamer Magazine, I am very interested in classic games. I do NOT like the new games. They are too violent. I like to play Pong. It is not at all violent. I heard they now have a color version of Pong. Is this true? If so, I would be VERY interested in playing it. Do they make Pong for the IBM-PC/XT compatible home computer systems? Are they fast enough? Are they in color? How much memory do I need? Is 640K enough? Can I use my CGA graphics card? Do they make Pong paddles for the IBM-PC/XT compatible home computer systems? What is the future of pong? Why don't they have pong in the video arcades anymore? Why do the kids wear big baggy pants and play violent games at the video arcade? Games like "eat-the-dots-ghost-chasing-power-pills" or "shoot-the-space-rock." I've even seen games that I think are called "kick-the-guy-really-hard-until-he-falls-down-and-can't-get-up-again" and "rip-the-spine-out-of-the-guy-so-he-can't-get-up-again!!!" (sorry about the exclamation marks, but that's just to show how violent they really are!!).Could your web site post people's Pong high-scores? Mine is 16.
Anyway, to sum up, Pong rules.
Anonymous Pong Enthusiast
P.S. I really like Pong.

- Anonymous, via e-mail

Dear Philip Thomas, er, we mean "anonymous",

Today is your lucky day! Just after we received your wiseass letter, Hasbro Interactive revealed they would, in fact, be updating "Pong" for the Sony PlayStation.

Check out the info on Pong and other classic related updates in our "E3 Special Report Section".

Raves 'n Rants cont...

The 'Phoenix' Speaks

I received the mag yesterday and it was GREAT!!!!!!! I'm hoping that there will be many more to come!

- Leonard Herman, rolenta@aol.com
Author of "Phoenix, The Fall and Rise of Video Games".

Leonard, if we can please you then we know we're doing something right. Thanks!
(Ed. note: If you don't think we're shameless name droppers, you've got a lot to learn! Now if only Nolan would write to us…)

"Wor" Monger

It's really nice to see there are those out there who still appreciate the value of the Glory Days of video gaming. All the hyped-up, 3D environments of today's games have only heightened my longing for the oldies. So many beauties have already been released for the PlayStation, which is my main interest these days (The Atari 1200XL I have no longer functions reliably).

This has started me obsessing about my all-time favorite, Wizard of Wor. A game which has eluded me, although I did get it for the 2600. The thought of the authentic arcade version being released, something I would've sworn wasn't possible back in the 80's, is almost too exciting for me to bear (really!).

I have already written to Midway about it and their response looked more like a form letter to young kids who are trying to pitch ideas to them. This would suggest that Midway either didn't read my letter at all or they're keeping a lid on the release of their next "Greatest Hits" volume. I can't believe they would omit Wizard of Wor, especially since it could, in fact, headline one of those CD's.

I am grateful for any information you can give me on this.

- David Redell, via snail mail

David, you are in luck! Digital Eclipse is currently in development creating the "Arcade's Greatest Hits: Atari Collection 3/Midway Collection 3" for both the PC and the Sony PlayStation.

Both releases will include Wizard of Wor and will be emulated for 100% arcade accuracy.

We're "scarcely at the pain threshold"

Our first issue was fortunate enough to be reviewed at a German website (http://ccc.webjump.com/). Seeing as we didn't know a lick of German we decided to run it through *Alta Vista's* language translator. As a result, not only do we still not understand German, we're beginning to question English as well.

...We *think* it's a positive review…..

In the autumn passed yearly appeared the first edition of the "Classic Gamer of magazines", one PAPER-LIKES for classical video games and computers. The compilation of the magazine published by Chris Cavanaugh resembles from Digital Presses.

Do not let you by the color Cover be deceptive, contents is black-and-white. Are positively noticeable the high-quality paper, attaching and the obliging/pleasing organization.

The first output has a scope from 40 pages, consisting of play tests, empiric reports, Stories and News. The latters are probably gathered from the Internet majority. The second output is to appear shortly, in addition, the No. 1 is still available.

The price is scarcely at the pain threshold, he amounts to inclusive dispatch to Europe 4,50 $. Address and closer information on the Website www.classicgamer.com.

Be sure to visit us on the web!
http://www.classicgamer.com

CLASSIC GAMER NEWSWIRE

LICK A VIDEO-GAME CHARACTER

Americans have chosen videogames as the topic they most want to see on a postage stamp commemorating the 1980's. The set of stamps will be one of ten recalling each decade of the century.

Other stamps commemorating the 1980's will depict the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial, the movie, "E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial" and the Cabbage Patch Kids.

DANCE TO PAC-MAN ONCE AGAIN

Remember tapping your toes to the sounds of 'Pac-Man Fever' in the 80's?

Well, put your dancing shoes back on! Buckner and Garcia have re-released their hit and it sounds better than ever.

Pac-Man Fever is now on CD along with other favorites, "Froggy's Lament", "Ode to Centipede" and "Goin' Berserk."

Visit their website at www.bucknergarcia.com for more details.

HASBRO NABS SOME HOT NAMCO PROPERTIES

It would appear Hasbro is going "classic crazy." Hot off the success of Frogger, Hasbro has hopped on a four-year deal with Namco to add 11 properties to its already huge classic library.

The agreement will give Hasbro the PC rights to develop, publish and distribute games such as Pac-Man, Ms. Pac-Man, and Dig Dug. They have also obtained multi-platform rights to Galaga, Galaxian, Pole Position, Mappy, and Bosconian.

In addition, Hasbro Interactive will create toys, handhelds and candy based on these characters.

The first games are scheduled for release in Fall 2000 to coincide with Pac-Man's 20th Anniversary.

"DOES MY JOYSTICK MAKE YOU HORNY?"

Sierra has released "Austin Powers: Operation Trivia" for home computers.

Save the world by answering pop culture trivia questions relating to the 60's, 70's, 80's and 90's as well as the Austin Powers movies.

It's a fun party game to play and features more than enough questions relating to videogames early days to give you the edge!

CLASSIC GAMER NEWSWIRE cont. . .

"Intruder Alert!
Intruder Alert!"

There would appear to be a huge fan of classic video-games lurking in the writing staff of Fox's "Futurama."

In its short, but funny, first season we were treated to Pac-Man, Berzerk and Tetris references.

Keep your eyes open when watching, as the gags tend to come fast and furious.

Check out Futurama, Sunday nights this Fall on Fox.

ATARI ANTIC PROJECT NOW ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

Kevin Savetz has acquired the rights to publish the library of **Atari Antic** and **STart Magazines** on the Web. These magazines focus on the 8-bit Atari Computers popularized in the 80's. His goal is to publish every magazine and he is seeking volunteers to help him in his quest.

You can visit his website at:
http://www.atarimagazines.com
or contact Kevin at:
Savetz@northcoast.com

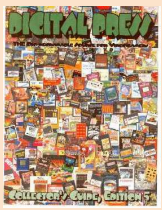
'PAC-MAN WORLD' TO BE RELEASED

Namco unveiled the new Pac-Man adventure, Pac-Man World, at the Electronics Entertainment Expo.

Eat, bounce, swim and jump through a factory, fun-house, outer-space and mansions on this PlayStation 3D platform adventure.

Also included will be a 3D maze mode as well as the original Pac-Man arcade game.

CLASSIC VIDEOGAMES COLLECTOR'S GUIDE VOLUME V NOW AVAILABLE



This guide is your "ultimate source for classic gaming," according to Joe Santulli, Editor of the **Digital Press** fanzine. This print version is 300 pages in length and features classic 8-bit systems including Atari, Bally's and Channel F and newer systems such as the Sega Master System. The guide is priced at $20.00 for US and Canada (and is well worth it!). To order the guide, contact Joe Santulli or send check or money order **payable to Joe Santulli** at:

Joe Santulli
Digital Press
44 Hunter Place
Pompton Lakes, NJ 07442

You can also e-mail the Digital Press gang at:
digitpress@ix.netcom.com

CLASSIC GAMER NEWSWIRE cont...

ARCADE LEGEND 'DIRK THE DARING' IS GOING 3D

Blue Byte Software announced they have acquired the worldwide rights to release "Dragon's Lair" in a 3D format.

Once again, you will control Dirk in his quest to rescue the fair princess, Daphney, who is being held by an evil dragon in the castle of a dark wizard.

Original Dragon's Lair creator, Don Bluth, will be heavily involved in the project.

Dragon's Lair 3D will be released in time for Christmas 2000 and will be available in both Mac and PC versions.

NEW LYNX GAME NOW AVAILABLE

Songbird Productions has announced the release of "Ponx" for The Atari Lynx.

This ball and paddle game's features include "multiple balls," "vs. computer" and the ability to play against a human opponent on the same Lynx unit.

The game retails for $39.95 and is available through the Songbird Productions website at:

http://songbird.atari.org

JAGUAR news

Hasbro Sets Jaguar Free

Hasbro Interactive has released all rights to the "Jaguar" hardware platform. This will allow software developers to create and publish software for the Jaguar system without having to obtain a licensing agreement from Hasbro Interactive. However, developers are not permitted to use the Atari trademark or logo in connection with their games.

Songbird Productions Responds by Announcing All New Jaguar Game Releases

In response to the above announcement, Songbird Productions (http://songbird.atari.org) will release a new game for the Jaguar late in 1999 titled "Protector." This will be a fast paced 2D shooter in the spirit of Defender

In addition to releasing Protector, Songbird has licensed several unreleased Jaguar games. Titles include "Soccer Kid" from Krisalis Software Ltd., "Hyper Force" from visual Impact and "Skyhammer" from Rebellion. At press time no release dates were available for these games.

OMC Games Will Debut Two New RPG's for the Jaguar CD Console

In another stunning announcement, OMC Game's stated that they would release two games, "The Assassin" and "Age of Darkness" for the Jaguar.

The first to be released, "The Assassin," will be a sci-fi/fantasy detective story set in the year 2147. The player will take the role of a Chicago detective who sets out to solve the case to find the murderers of his little brother. OMC Games owner, James Garvin, promises "The Assassin" will be in the spirit of Hong Kong Cinema flicks. "The Assassin" will also be released for the Atari XL/XE on 5 ¼" floppies. Both versions will be released in the first quarter of 2000

"Age of Darkness" will be OMC Games' second release and is said to be "the largest game world in RPG history". The world will include 6 planes of existence and over 650 Layers of the Abyss. The player will be able to get a job, advance levels, cast spells and create custom equipment. Age of Darkness will be released late 2000.

Visit **www.omcgames.com** for more information.

SONY PLAYSTATION RELEASE SCHEDULE FOR UPDATED AND CLASSIC RELATED GAMES

September '99

Final Fantasy VII
Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine

October '99

Tomorrow Never Dies
Pac-Man World
Final Fantasy Anthology

November '99

Superman
Gauntlet Legends
Mortal Kombat: Special Forces

GAME BOY RELEASE SCHEDULE FOR UPDATED AND CLASSIC RELATED GAMES

Q3 '99

1942 (Capcom)
Asteroids (Crave)
Bomberman Quest (Electro Brain)
Castlevania II (Konami)
Magical Mickey Tetris (Capcom)
Marble Madness (Midway)
Paperboy (Midway)
Yar's Revenge (Activision)

Q4 '99

Pac-Man Color (Namco)
Rampage 2 (Midway)

Visit the Classic Gamer Newswire on the web.

http://www.classicgamer.com

NINTENDO 64 RELEASE SCHEDULE FOR UPDATED AND CLASSIC RELATED GAMES

September '99

Mario Golf
Paperboy
Gauntlet Legends

Third Quarter '99

X-Men
Bomberman 64 II

October '99

Space Invaders 64

November '99

Battlezone 64
Donkey Kong Country 64

December '99

Excitebike 64

TBA

Super Mario RPG 2

ATARI 2600 "HOMEBREW" RELEASE SCHEDULE

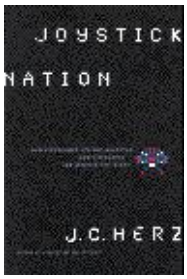
Available Now

Mystery Science Theater 2600 (Tim Snider)
INV Proto
2600 Post-it Note
Alphanumeric Madness
Video Time Machine (Chris Cracknell)
Dark Mage
Edtris 2600
Oystron
Rescue Bira Bira
This Planet Sucks

TBA

Pressure Gauge!

Go to Hozer Video for ordering info:
http://www.angelfire.com/ma/hozervideo



Book Bytes

Reviewed by Patrick Wong

Title: Joystick Nation: How Videogames Ate Our Quarters, Won Our Hearts, and Rewired Our Minds
Author: J.C. Herz
Publisher: Little, Brown and Company. 230 pages. $23.95

It would seem videogames are marketed primarily to males and whenever a female shows interest, every guy should stand, take notice and wonder, “What's this girl thinking about?” In *Joystick Nation*, J.C. Herz describes how videogames played an important part in her childhood and tells how “Videogames ate our quarters, won our hearts and rewired our minds.”

When first glancing at the pages, you'll immediately assume that *Joystick Nation* is more of a look back at video games of the 80’s rather than a history of the video game world. Herz fondly remembers, "I was toggling a joystick before I learned to read, mastered Breakout stratagems before memorizing the multiplication table, conquered Asteroids before solving the mystery of long division." She would definitely fit the profile of a hardcore gamer.

However, soon after, the book begins an analysis of how videogames relate to other media and everyday life. She observes, "Videogames are perfect training for life in fin de siecle America, where daily existence demands the ability to parse sixteen kinds of information being fired at you simultaneously from telephones, television, fax machines, pagers, personal digital assistants, voice messaging systems, postal delivery, office e-mail, and the Internet." Ms. Herz is obviously a very busy woman.

She begins at the birth of videogames when a Digital Equipment Corporation computer landed on the doorsteps of MIT and a bunch of students collaborated in their spare time to program a game called "Space War." From there the book lays out a timetable covering almost everything from the legendary Atari 2600 to today's revolutionary Nintendo 64. She then follows up with a chapter in which she describes gametypes by their categories: Action, Adventure, Fighting and so on. She sees fit to include a few quick reviews on some of the various games, "Batman Returns (a good Super NES and Sega game), Bram Stoker's Dracula (a bad SNES and Sega game), Home Alone and Home Alone 2 (awful), Hunt for Red October (worse), Rambo 3, The Last Action Hero, Hook, Robocop and the Rocketeer (ugh), Wayne's World (bogus)."

> “You can't talk about Asteriods, Pac-Man and Space Invaders before some link to Doom, Myst and Mortal Kombat is formed.”

The author tries to cover as many topics about gaming as she can. She includes everything from the dark, gloomy pinball parlors of yesterday to the evolution of today's neon sign covered video arcades. It brought back memories of how kids used to beg to be left at the video arcade at Coney Island while their parents went on rides.

There is also a discussion about Western and Eastern cultures where she tries to break down the primary differences between DC/ Marvel comic art to Japanimation art. Although in the end she admits, "Of course, to kids playing Comix Zone or Marvel Superheroes or Tekken 2, the distinction between comic book and videogame or Asian and Western is completely irrelevant. The only categories they recognize are ‘fun’ and ‘not fun’.”

She leaves no stone unturned, as there is even a chapter on Boys vs. Girls. She plays Pop Psychologist when she describes a woman’s response to beating a level in the game Tetris, “Yes! The Mess is vanishing! I can make the Mess disappear! It's not about blowing things up. It's about cleaning things up. Tetris speaks volumes about the difference between women and men vis a vis videogames." She may be right. Remember Tetris 2? If Tetris is for women then Tetris 2 is definitely for men. Use bombs to clean up the mess! To quote Tim Allen, "More Power!"

There is, however, a disturbing chapter on videogame porn where she writes, "Not coincidentally, the price and variety of plastic-sealed videogame periodicals corresponds to the shrink-wrapped magazines on the other side of the newsstand, the ones that artfully pose topless nineteen-year-old covergirls. It's curiously symmetrical: Nintendo Power, Game Pro, Flux, Playboy,

Hustler, Juggs." Later in the chapter, there seems to be some underlying sarcasm when she describes her visit to Nintendo. The author seems to resent Nintendo's wholesome family oriented, kid-friendly environment and goes on to describe Nintendo's tip line as the flip side of a phone sex line. It's disturbing because the Nintendo tour doesn't seem to belong in the chapter, yet because it's there it leaves you with the impression that reading Nintendo Power will eventually lead to Juggs Magazine and calling Nintendo's Hotline will lead you to porno 900 number addiction. At least it seems mapped that way.

For those readers looking for a book about someone reminiscing about videogames' glory days, *Joystick Nation* includes a few memories. She describes a walk down memory lane while visiting the American Museum of the Moving Image: "You look up from a game of Galaxian half expecting to find yourself back in the mall as a teenager, surrounded by shanky metalhead kids in their Van Halen T-shirts and black rubber bracelets." Everyone has to remember those black rubber bracelets! She then tells us how the phrase "YOWIE MOOEY!!!" became her and her brother's sibling code word for the last moment before a situation falls apart in a game. Like how I would say "OH NO!!" and then "BOOM" the game was over.

If *Joystick Nation* were to have another name, it would be "JoyPad Nation." As much of a history and sociology lesson the book may be, it doesn't explore the old Atari games nearly enough. You can't talk about Asteriods, Pac-Man and Space Invaders before some link to Doom, Myst and Mortal Kombat is formed. There's a continued blurring of arcade and video games to computer games that's likely to continue. It used to be so easy to talk about Atari games and not have to bring up PC games. Herz's *Joystick Nation* blurs the picture even more.

Editor's Note: Lately this book has been taking a considerable amount of flak in the classic gaming community. People have questioned J.C. Herz's historical accuracy as well as criticizing her flagrant use of "large" words.

To add fuel to the fire, PBS announced recently that a documentary based on "Joystick Nation" is in the works.

What are your thoughts on the book as well as the PBS decision?

We'd love to hear from you on the subject! Write to us at:

Classic Gamer Magazine
7770 Regents Road #113-293
San Diego, Ca 92122
cav@classicgamer.com

WIN!

Win an autographed copy of "Phoenix - The Fall and Rise of Videogames" by Leonard Herman.

Classic Gamer Magazine is giving away two autographed copies of Leonard Herman's authoritative book about the history of videogames.

But ya gotta earn it!

We're looking for aspiring Longfellows and Maya Angelous!

Send either an original classic videogame poem or Haiku and we'll award Phoenix as a prize in each category.

One prize per category will be awarded.
Winners and select entries will be printed in a future issue.

Poem Example:

There once was a man
who would boast,
"I'm the man who can
eat the most"
Although he ate lots
He ate only dots
And occasional side-
dish of ghost.

- Damien Quicksilver

Haiku Example:
(A Haiku consists of a 3 line stanza with a 5,7,5 syllable pattern)

Donkey Kong climbs up
Crazy barrels do descend
Die Mario! Die!

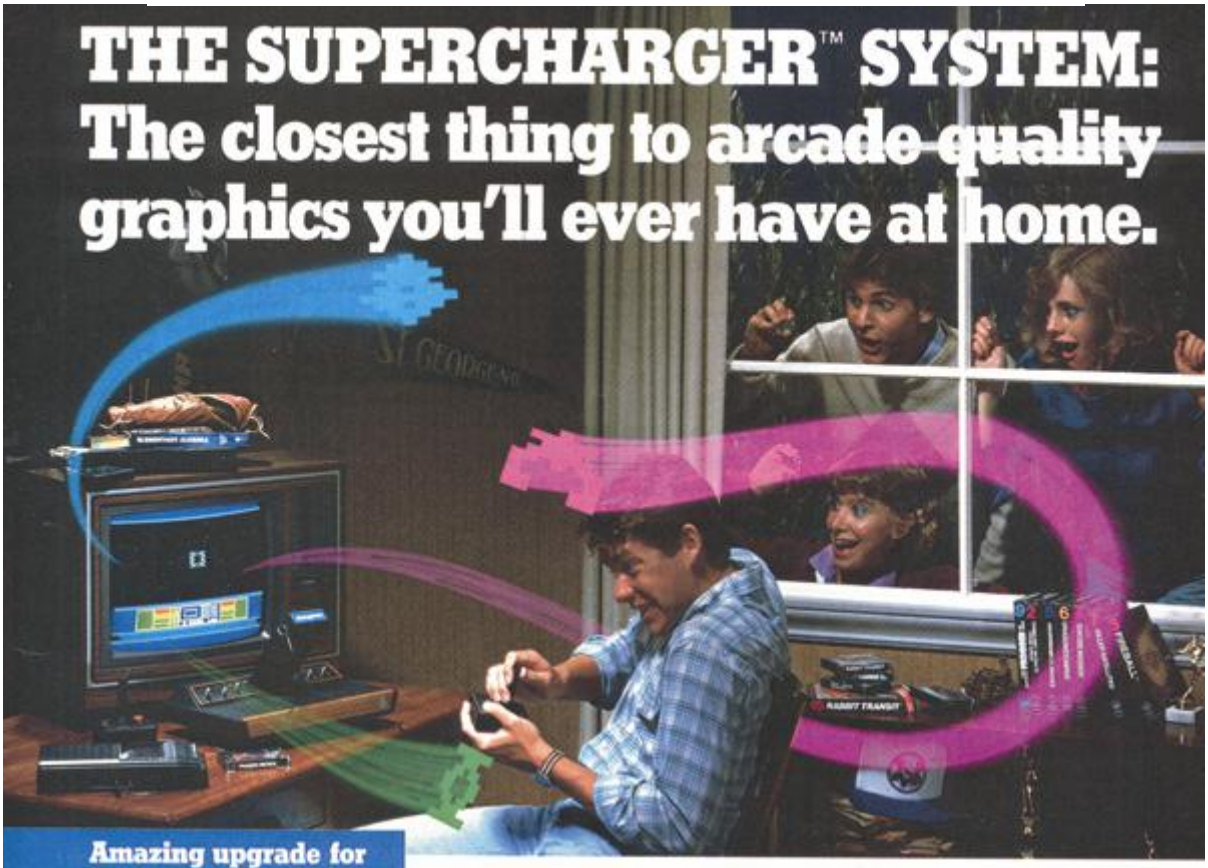
- too embarrassed to admit

Send in your entry (with your contact info) to:

Classic Gamer Magazine Poetry Contest
7770 Regents Road #113-293
San Diego, Ca 92122

Or e-mail to: cav@classicgamer.com

Classic Advertisement
1983



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The Atari 5200

a closer look

by Patrick Wong

Atari's motto was "Power without the Price." It should have read "Power *at* a Price."

When Atari took their low-end computer, the Atari 400, gave her a facelift, a model number twice the value of the 2600 and called her their "Super System," they also gave her an enormous pricetag - $299.95 (I guess it also had to cost twice as much as the 2600). Atari promised she would be worth every penny and of the millions of promises Atari made, this was probably one of the few they kept to their loyal supporters.

The 5200 was Atari's answer to the Colecovision. From the moment you picked it up you knew you had (as Atari put it) a "Super System" in your hands. It came packaged in a huge box. When you opened the box and picked up the system, you could feel the power in your hands. Size? This system was BIG - twice the size of the 2600. She had a sleek, black design with a silver strip running across the middle of her, four controller ports (the later models were made with two) and a storage place at the top of the system where you would store your controllers, hidden from sight, when they weren't in use. If you put the 5200 next to the old style Sega Genesis and asked someone which one looked "State of the Art", chances are they would choose the Atari.

The controllers looked futuristic as well but ironically ended up being some of the worst controllers ever made. Atari made sure everyone was aware this system had a "Pause" button on the controllers which was unheard of unless you owned an Intellivision.

The moment you turned it on and were greeted by a giant, multi-colored Atari Fuji, you knew it was something special.

The games were equally special. The "Super System" brought the arcade games home to you. Even though the Colecovision may have had slightly better graphics, the Atari 5200 had the big name titles and something the Coleco games didn't feature (and which no arcade experience would be without in the 80s): the intermissions.

Who could ever forget how awesome it was to beat the Strawberry Board in Pac-Man and be awarded by the animated intermission featured in the arcades? Who could ever forget the awe of playing a Pac-Man game that actually resembled the arcade version? Everyone remembers how awful looking, yet fun to play, the 2600 version was. If the 5200 would be remembered for anything, it would be that it was the first system to bring faithful translations of the arcade home to you.

"The Atari 5200 had the big arcade games that Colecovision didn't. "

From Defender to Dig Dug to Galaxian to Joust to Mario Bros. to Ms. Pac-Man to Moon Patrol to Pac-Man to Pengo to Pole Position and Vanguard, the Atari 5200 had the big arcade games that Colecovision didn't. Add Atari's enormous trakball along with Centipede, Millipede or Missile Command and you'd swear you brought the arcade experience home. Sure, the Atari 2600 had the same titles as well, but it didn't stand up to the 5200's graphics and sound. Games like Pengo and Vanguard were almost pixel perfect translations of the arcades.

Atari also brought us a special feature which made the 5200 "State of the Art" - voice synthesization *without* an add-on accessory. The voice synthesizer in Atari's RealSports Baseball helped make America's favorite pastime that much more enjoyable. To actually hear the balls and strikes being called out was like hearing words in the early motion picture reels. It was a small step towards bringing us something we would later call "Multimedia." This was significant because it provided a glimpse into the future as to what sports games were going to offer - not just hearing balls and strikes but hearing commentary and line-ups as well.

There were also many little things that may have gone unnoticed by gamers. How many remember the controller attachment that allowed two controllers to be held together to play Atari's Space Dungeon? One to move, one to shoot. It may not sound like much but there was something about it that made the arcade experience that much more enjoyable. Anyone who played that game would agree how great it was just to play a game like Space Dungeon at home.

Of course, not every arcade conversion was perfect. These 'imperfect' games were mainly created by third party developers. Disasters such as Parker Brothers' Popeye, Q*Bert, Star Wars: The Arcade Game and Fox's Wizard of Wor made the 5200 look more like a "Stupid-System" than anything super. What happened to Brutus' head in Popeye? Did the fight start before the game was turned on? Where were the intermissions in Q*Bert? No intermission equals no arcade experience. Star Wars: The Arcade Game was just plain awful.

(Continued on page 50)

My 25

"The NEW Classic Gamer"

By Damien Quicksilver

It can be difficult to write a magazine article. You have to sit down, focus, etc…

It's not really FUN. Actually, it's quite easy to put off. I'd rather just play Bomberman on my Sega Saturn.

What's that? Did I just say I was playing on one of the "newer" systems? Cast out the infidel! But wait, hear me out for a moment - I am here to RE-DEFINE classic gaming for you.

If you like your current definition, and feel threatened by a redefinition, then EAT THIS ARTICLE. If you think you're a classic gamer because you have a closet full of Atari 2600 carts you seldom, if ever play, then just TURN THE PAGE. Unless you want to see classic gaming encompass both OLD and NEW and to reject those who cling to either, then DON'T GO PAST THIS LINE.

I'm warning you, any line now...

So maybe you're a tad CURIOUS as to what I have to say, even though you may not LIKE it, here goes:

Person A:

Here is a teenager hanging out with his friends. He shows off his Playstation and how he has all the newest and hottest games. He then takes them into the computer room to show them his Pentium-7 @ 2000 Megahertz with VooDoo 9 4-D acceleration. They say, "Wow!" and leave. He then turns on MTV.

Person B:

Here is an adult hanging out with his friends. He shows off his Atari 2600 and how he has all the oldest and rarest games. He then takes them into the computer room to show them his 80/88 @ 4.77 Megahertz with CGA. They say, "Wow!" and leave. He then turns on VH-1.

So, who's the classic gamer? Neither!!!

Allow me to introduce you to...

Person C:

Here is a person of any age. He knows that a classic is a work of enduring quality and is not concerned with how old or new a game is. He plays Pac-Man and he plays Burger-Time. He even plays newer games like Puzzle Fighter and Bomberman. He's just out to have fun. He refuses to be moved by graphics or sounds. It does not matter what his friends think because he's not trying to show off. It's not a gaming image... it's a gaming lifestyle. He's THE NEW CLASSIC GAMER.

> *"I am here to RE-DEFINE classic gaming for you."*

Yes, I know in all aspects of society today, we are drowning in kitsch. Music, Movies and surprise, VIDEO GAMES are all flooding us with a sea of mediocrity. Old games can feel safer, if you just stick with what you know. True, since there was not the technology to create the pretty cover of "good" graphics that modern video games so often have, then there is not as great a danger of "judging the book by its cover." But if you take modern games and just RIP OFF THE DAMN COVER, then you will see that some of the "books" actually have a "plot." Do not deny that there has always been mediocrity! Do not take the "easy" way out! Open your eyes and see for yourself! Remember this definition of Classic: *"A work of enduring quality."*

Keep repeating it to yourself until you can't forget!

Do not assume that old mediocrity deserves the term 'classic' any more than new mediocrity does. Do not assume that new excellence is any less deserving of the term than old excellence is. Dragster had good graphics for its time...but it SUCKED! How often do you play Dragster? How often do you play half of your old games? Especially the rare ones?! Are you a "Nostalgic COLLECTOR" or are you a "Classic *GAMER*" Make a choice! The time is NOW! Stop looking at your games stop talking about them and start PLAYING them!

(Author's Note: The opinions expressed in this article are those of Damien Quicksilver alone and are not necessarily shared by Classic Gamer Magazine. The Surgeon General probably wouldn't want you to eat this page. Ink can be bad for your health, although paper is high in fiber. Fnord.)

CGM

Editor's Note: So, readers, is Damien full of donkey doo? Or do you agree with him? Drop us a line and tell us what you think! cav@classicgamer.com

lost Arcade Classic

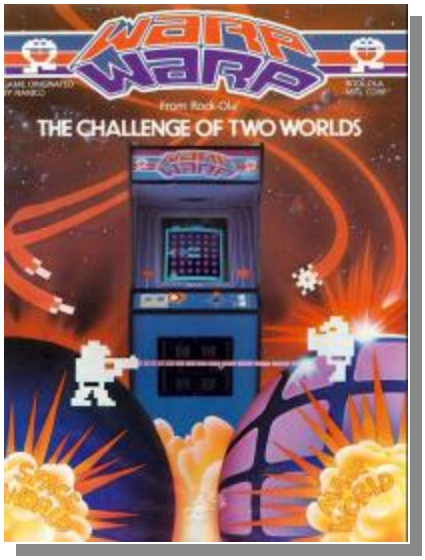
WARP WARP

by Kyle Snyder

When you ask the average Joe or Josephine which video game they associate most with the early 80's, you get a variety of answers...Space Invaders, Donkey Kong, Asteroids, Galaga, and of course, Pac-Man and his family. Not ONCE will you ever hear somebody excitedly shout..."OH YEAH MAN!!!! WARP WARP WAS AWESOME!!!!!"

This is not to say that the game has nothing going for it at all...in fact the gameplay and origin is rather interesting for such an unknown game.

It SHOULD have been big. It had a lot going for it. Imagine this... Spring 1981...Namco, the highly successful Japanese programming powerhouse just made fortunes for Bally/Midway in 1979 and 1980 with Galaxian and PacMan, respectively and were the hot ticket of the industry. Then there was Rock-Ola, one of the largest manufacturers of jukeboxes the music industry had ever seen. With video games being at the biggest high the industry would ever see, it was only natural that Rock-Ola would see opportunity for expansion into the arcade market. So, they contacted Namco for the exclusive rights to manufacture the "next mega-hit." Seemed like a sure thing.



The resulting game is a surreal maze & shooting game where you control a little spaceman with a four-way joystick. Play begins in a large open field with walls being the outer borders and two large rectangles forming a hallway in the center. These rectangles flash from time to time with the word "Warp" - hence the title "Warp Warp." If you enter this warp hallway during the time it flashes, you are transported to a basic maze comprised of evenly placed squares, much like Exidy's Targ. You can "toggle" between the two screens each time you enter the flashing hallway.

Of course, there has to be some kind of baddie, or there wouldn't be too much of a game. From out of the corners, strange creatures, resembling giant walking tongues and pointy headed spiders emerge one at a time. The object is to destroy these monsters with your gun before they destroy you. Pretty basic pathos for an early video game. Of course, the uglies will speed up and take on a rather frantic abruptness to their movements which adds to the challenge. Oh yes, in addition to chasing you down they are also shooting at you.

Unfortunately, the game never saw a great deal of success. I never saw Warp Warp in person, and I only discovered it when I saw a wrestling game called Mat Mania in a white cabinet with Warp Warp artwork on the side. I decided to do research in back issues of Re-Play magazine to find out about this lost classic. I found an article with the presidents of Rock-Ola and Namco shaking hands over the contract for the "next big thing." It's a shame really. (Funny that the next hits from Namco were Dig Dug and Pole Position.)

On the VERY off chance you happen to find this game intact, play a few rounds and see if it isn't infectious and well done. Or, check it out on MAME like I did.

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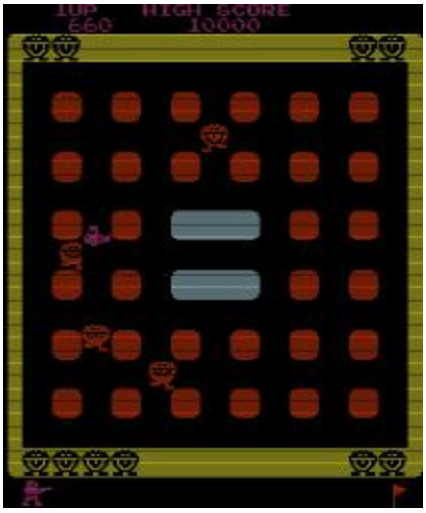


Focus On Intellivision

Pac-Man

Publisher: Atarisoft
(later re-released by INTV)
Released: 1983
System: Mattel Intellivision
Reviewed by: Kyle Snyder
Overall Rating: B+

Pac-Man is quite possibly the most translated arcade game of all time. Versions have appeared on nearly all home platforms from the Atari (2600, 5200 & 7800), Commodore Computers, the NES, Game Boy and most recently on the Playstation. One of the better incarnations however, is largely overlooked...the Atarisoft Pac-Man for the Mattel Intellivision (later, INTV would publish the identical game without the "Atarisoft" logo on the opening screen).

Atarisoft's Pac-Man was released just before the great crash of 1983, so not many collectors had a chance to see it shine. In 1983, the main focus was the Atari 5200 versus the Colecovision, and the poor Mattel console was left in the dust.

Nevertheless, Atarisoft translated a wonderful version of Namco's dot-gobbler. The graphics are very close to the arcade version. The maze is a little stunted as the sprites are rather large, but the walls are the familiar blue solid walls of yore. Pac-Man is the roundest that I have seen him appear on a classic console, and the ghosts are well defined, although the eyes are still not quite right. The fruits actually look BETTER than in the arcade version! Check out the light gradiation on the oranges of the third and fourth rounds.

Possibly the most welcome and unexpected detail comes after two boards are cleared! Yes, Atarisoft included the intermissions!! In the first intermission, Pac-Man is chased right to left by Blinky and then emerges as a HUGE Pac-Man (Super Pac-Man's first cameo?) chasing the now scared- stiff blue ghost! The later intermissions are intact as well and produce the same chuckles as their arcade counterparts did.

Pac-Man

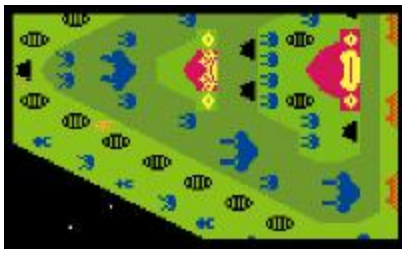
My only real complaint is that the Intellivision's disc controllers are not well suited to a game of this variety. My advice would be to comb the flea markets and thrift stores for the snap-on joystick topper, as it makes this game exemplary.

You can't go wrong with a little Pac-Man, and Atarisoft's Intellivision adaptation definitely delivers!

The Dreadnaught Factor

Publisher: Activision
Released: 1983
System: Mattel Intellivision
Reviewed by: D.B. Caulfield
Overall Rating: B+

Definitely "borrowing" from the Star Wars saga, The Dreadnaught Factor allows you to pilot a Novaray Hyperfighter into a face-to-face battle with hulking space cruisers.


Dreadnaught Factor

These "Zorban Dreadnaught Battlecrafts" are making a path for a stargate with intentions of destroying the planet Terra. Terra's only hope is to send a lone pilot in a Hyperfighter through the stargate in order to battle the enemy juggernaut head on.

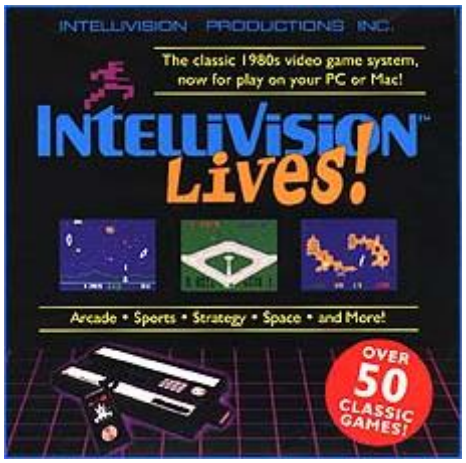
You begin with ten Novaray Hyperfighters in your arsenal. As the Dreadnaught ship lumbers slowly from the right side of your screen, your ship passes over it head on from the left. Your goal is to destroy the ship by dropping bombs on the sixteen energy vents located throughout the vessel while avoiding their defenses and destroying their gun batteries with your laserfire. Once you pass the ship, you will return to it by traveling through the stargate again. With each subsequent fly over, the Dreadnaught will get closer to accessing the stargate. (Tip: Destroy the ships engines first, located in the rear, to slow its progress.)

Although this is one of the more difficult Intellivision games to locate, I would highly recommend tracking it down as it is definitely a gem.

CGM

Intellivision Lives! On Your Computer!

By Chris Cavanaugh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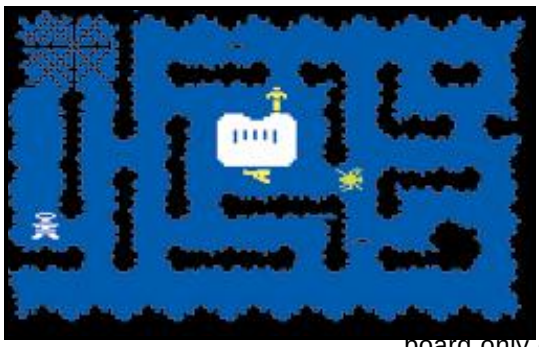
I don't think the console wars of today have anything on the console wars of the late 70's/early 80's. You had a choice to make: The Atari 2600 or the Mattel Intellivision. For me the choice was always obvious: The Atari 2600. For some reason, I always felt superior over kids who owned the Intellivision and would usually voice my opinion accordingly. "Oh, you own *that* console? It's okay, I suppose," and then I would continue to snicker behind their backs while playing "Adventure." Of course there were no valid reasons for me to feel as I did. Mattel's Intellivision was graphically and audibly superior over the 2600. However, George Plimpton's attitude on Intellivision commercials made me want to put my foot through the TV screen. Intellivision owners would reciprocate their feelings of superiority by managing a guffaw while comparing Atari's sports games to the Intellivision's. I think Odyssey owners were created so the Atari and Intellivision owners could agree on whom to laugh at.

As I got older and wiser, and had a tad more expendable cash to blow on my videogame collection, I discovered an Intellivision and a few of its games in a thrift store and decided to purchase them for the sake of promoting world peace. From that day forward I have enjoyed the Intellivision immensely and have learned to forgive those who put down my beloved Atari 2600 (George Plimpton being the exception).

Major League Baseball

Recently, I was glad to learn a CD-ROM titled, *Intellivision Lives*, was being released so everyone could have a chance to play these great games. *Intellivision Lives* is not just an Intellivision emulator but an encyclopedic history of the game unit as well. Aside from over 50 games, there is an easy to navigate menu which takes the reader on an interactive journey exploring the many facets of the Intellivision.



Night Stalker

Spacey, if not hummable music plays as you read the development history, programmer biographies and their often-hilarious stories of how the games came to fruition. The CD also includes box art, trivia, hidden codes, screenshots and even a commercial featuring a certain aforementioned spokesman.

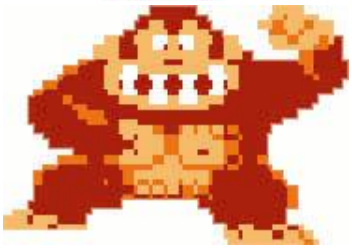
Oh yeah…it has games, too! Well over 50 original Intellivision titles are playable at the click of a button. The standard games, such as the surprisingly complex Utopia, the arcade-like Astrosmash and the "Pac-Manesque" Night Stalker are included. The real gems are the rarer games, such as Yogi's Adventure, Brickout, Hypnotic Lights and Santa's Helper, which were never released for a number of reasons. Unfortunately, not many of the unreleased games are available to play, as many are demos or incomplete. Also unavailable for play are arcade ports and other licensed games such as Burgertime and the Tron series.

As with all emulators, the only thing lacking is the ability to emulate the original console's controllers. *Intellivision Lives* is no exception. The gold disc Intellivision controller could be frustrating at times and using a computer keyboard only compounds the problem. If a device which allows you to port your original Intellivision controller into your PC becomes available, we'll let you know.

Overall, we highly recommend this CD. The games certainly do hold up well, and it's also a great nostalgia trip. I also implore any die-hard Atari 2600 owners who may still have ill feelings towards the Intellivision to give it a whirl. You will be surprised at what great games you are missing out on. Just try not to put your foot through the monitor when you see George.

Overall Rating: A-

Visit : http://www.intellivisionlives.com for more details .



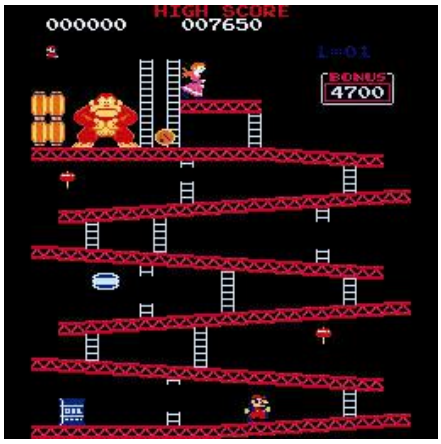
Doin' The DONKEY KONG™

by Darryl Guenther

Back in the day when arcades and corner markets were after school hangouts, one could expect to hear the "whacka-whacka" sounds of Pac-Man, the lasers firing up in Defender and the crackling, shooting sound of Centipede. There weren't any life-like PCM samples or 3D graphics. That was much of the charm of video games of the past; they were unique to themselves. They had characters who only lived in that world. These games generated sounds that did not exist previously. Donkey Kong, by Nintendo, was one of those games. It had the unique, cutesy sounds necessary for a good game. However, not only did it have the sounds, it also had the cute on-screen characters. In fact, a couple of the characters were to be much more. They became mascots that have stood the test of time.

Back in 1981, Nintendo released Donkey Kong (the mistranslation of "Stubborn Monkey" in Japanese.) It was the brainchild of Shigeru Miyamoto. Mario, originally labeled "Jumpman", was said to have been modeled after Shigeru's landlord. He didn't actually become officially labeled as Mario until 1982, when he became the bad guy, capturing Donkey Kong in Donkey Kong Jr. Later on, Mario would star with his brother, Luigi (not "Loogy" for my Jr. High peers of the time), in Mario Bros. He then went on to star in the Super Mario series. Donkey Kong himself continued on as well, starring with all his friends in the Donkey Kong Country series of games.

Now that we're familiar with the characters, let's talk about the game. Donkey Kong was not just based on cute, detailed characters, music, and interesting sound effects. It was much more! The entire package was put together in such a way that it seemed to come to life. The detail ranged from the characters themselves to the game play elements. Donkey Kong seemed to have a mind of his own, throwing barrels whichever way he deemed necessary. The fireballs (all levels except "rivets" screen) and firefoxes ("rivets" screen) roamed in a very unpredictable manner (as fire generally does). Other objects such as springs and mud pies were not "alive," but they were kept in motion by the forces around them. All of the elements fit together so well, that it was easy to be swept away into that world.



Arcade

Much detail was also placed on control. It was very easy to find the bottom of the ladders. Mario could also jump off a structure and spring back from any of the outer edges. Timing was the essence, as one never knew what pattern the barrels could end up in by the time they reached the player. Many of these details were left out of the home system conversions that followed. In the arcade version, one could leap off the end of a structure only to be bounced back up from the edge. Many home versions (except a few by Atarisoft) just ricocheted one backwards, without the upward spring. Even Nintendo's home version left out the "spring-back" jump.

There were four screens to the game: The barrels, the rivets, the elevator and the conveyor belt (left out in most home conversions, except those by Atari and Ocean). The rivets screen was always the screen that ended the level. Two different configurations of these

levels existed. The Japanese version simply cycled through the above order. After the rivet screen, Donkey Kong would fall from the disassembled structure, and Mario would be reunited with Paula.

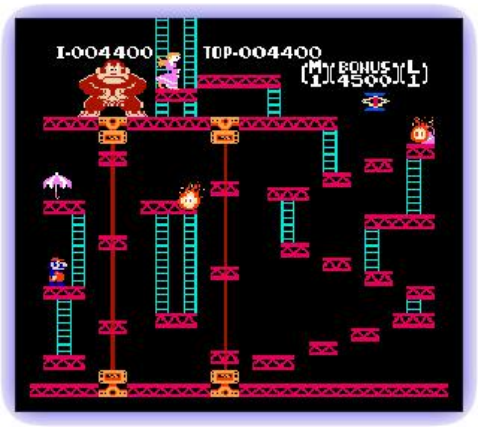
Commodore 64

The American version differed in screen order. Level one was the barrels and rivet screen. Level two consisted of the barrels, elevator, and rivet screen. Level three consisted of the barrels, conveyor belt, elevators, and rivets. From then on, many other combinations of screens followed. For this reason, many people didn't even know that the conveyor belt level existed. Between turns, level progress was displayed in meters, shown by the number of Donkey Kongs stacked. The Max was 6 high (150m).

As mentioned earlier, many home versions spawned from the original. In fact, Donkey Kong was Colecovision's flagship packaged game, practically selling the system. However, it was a very rough version. The top level was eliminated, placing Donkey Kong on the opposite side of the barrels screen, and the fireballs and "crazy barrels" were eliminated. The elevator screen was missing the springs (or affectionately called "springers"). Instead, they were replaced by non-menacing, duck-like firefox wannabees! The rivet screen was intact, except for one level. Unfortunately, the cute animations, such as the dying sequences and intermissions were missing.

Atari VCS/2600

One may ask, "If the Colecovision version was so bad, why did it sell the system?" The answer lies in Coleco owning the rights to all *console* system versions. Coleco programmed the already limited Atari 2600 (VCS) version. This one only consisted of two levels, the barrels and rivets. The barrel screen was so limited one couldn't even walk or fall off the end of a level. Subsequently, falling off the level on the barrels screen in the Colecovision version would not result in death either. Instead, it would cause Mario to drop the hammer and continue on. In the VCS version, the player didn't even have the satisfaction of walking off or even reaching the top of the screen before continuing to the next level.



NES

The rivets screen wasn't much prettier either. It consisted of 5 levels that extended across the entire screen. The firefoxes looked even more like poor renditions of ducks. They were not able to travel up and down the ladders; thus, once the hammer was used on the fireball of that level, the player had to patiently wait for it to disappear. Once a rivet was removed, the player would ırn for falling in the hole. However, Mario wouldn't fall. He would just simply freeze as if he were hit by an object and then "death" music would play.

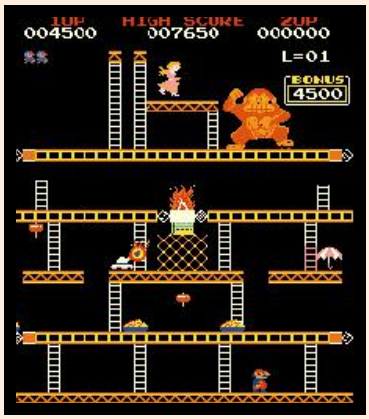
Luckily for us, Atari and Atarisoft obtained the rights to the home computer version. The version for Atari computer systems was much more accurate. All the music, animation and intermissions were present. The screens followed the arcade's original order and even featured the conveyor belt screen. However, due to the lower resolution, the screens were not all that cosmetically appealing and the top level of the barrels screen was cut off. All enemies were included, although the fireballs and firefoxes were combined into a hybrid of sorts. Crazy barrels were unpredictable, as were the paths the regular barrels would take. The spring-back jump was correctly implemented as well.

Also from Atari came the Commodore Vic20 and C-64 versions. As one would expect, the Vic20 version looked awful. The crazy thing was, somebody took the time to cram all of the intermissions, boards (conveyor belt too!), animations, (lose turn spin), fireballs, crazy barrels, etc. into the 5k available in the Vic! Maybe Coleco should have taken some tips from the Atarisoft programmer when they programmed their 16-24k version of Donkey Kong.

Intellivision

The Commodore 64 version looked pretty good, however the

Crazy Kong



Another similar game (unlicensed copy as far as I know) is Crazy Kong. Crazy Kong has a different sound chip and the music is gone. Crazy Kong only throws three barrels at a time and he doesn't move to pick up each one. It was more of a corner store/ bowling alley discounted game. Subtle changes have been made, such as changing the level screen to, "How High Can You Try??" Also, a different graphic is used for Crazy Kong on the other screens. The end of the barrel screen girders have been cut off at the ladders.

Crazy Kong Tips:

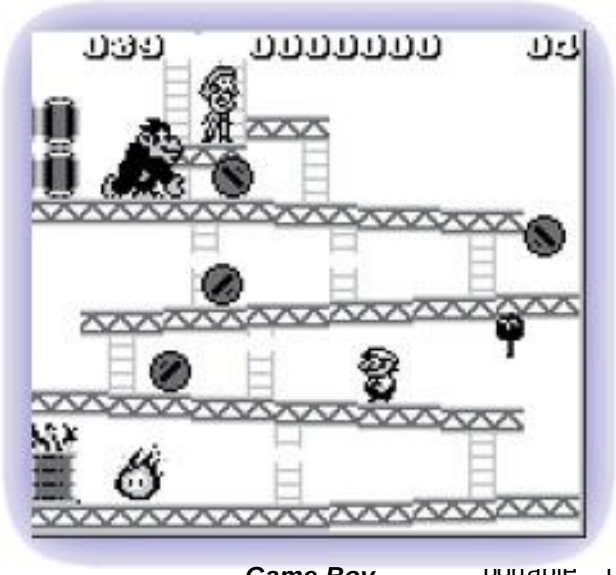
The "black hole" level warp can be accomplished by climbing up the first complete ladder on the barrels screen. Tap the joystick until Mario is hanging with one foot off and jump to the right. If performed correctly, Mario will fall through the floor and will warp to the second screen.

Another Crazy Kong trick is to get to the second conveyor screen (it's faster). Grab the first hammer and run to the right side of the screen as the conveyor travels in that direction. Once Mario reaches the far right, he will drop the hammer. However, it will still be there. If it is pointed down, it will continue to hammer pies, even when Mario is on other levels. Also, on the rivets screen: Don't use the top hammer, and it will turn into "Gold Bars" as a reward. Also, notice the true Donkey Kong image behind the large Crazy Kong image.

control was slow and sluggish. Finding the bottom of ladders could be difficult and it was missing the "How High Can You Get?" screen and music. Of course, the sound was fairly weak due to the "SID" sound chip, which was designed more for music than games. All-in-all, the versions were pretty impressive for their time, especially compared to the other options available.

Colecovision

Over the years, other versions popped up . In 1987, Ocean gained the rights from Atari and created a new C-64 version, as well as an Amstrad PC version. These featured more animation and all screens were present (even the High Score and Insert Coin screens!). The Ocean versions followed the Japanese version: barrels, conveyor, elevator, and rivets. Overall, it was set up as close to the arcade machine as anything of its time for the home systems.



Game Boy

Later on the home-front, Nintendo created their own home version for the NES. Here we have a system perfectly capable of recreating the arcade experience at home. What does Nintendo do? They left out the conveyor screen, limited the fireballs of the rivets screen to not ascend above the second level, and raised the second level hammer up one level to where the fireball can't reach. They had the graphics, the sound, everything, but they chose to use a smaller cart. The average person didn't seem to know any better. Many didn't know the missing conveyor screen even existed. Those who did, settled until Donkey Kong Jr. was released. DK Jr. included all four of the DK Jr. levels, but still lacked animation and intermissions.

Strangely enough, the Atari 7800 version of Donkey Kong (programmed by Coleco) was an almost exact duplicate of the NES conversion. However, the sound was *horrible* and the resolution not quite as sharp.

Nintendo's Game Boy conversion was well done considering it was on a small b/w portable. They even added some additional levels.

If you ever have a chance to play (or buy) Donkey Kong on one of these great machines or home ports, don't pass it up. The game is 17 years old, but it can sure take one back to the past in a heartbeat.

CGM

Atari 2600 Game Reviews

COMBAT

Atari/Atari VCS (2600)
Released as "Tank Plus" for Sears
Model Number: CX2601
Released: 1977
Programmer(s): Larry Kaplan, Joe DeCuir, and Larry Wagner
Reviewed by: D.B Caulfield

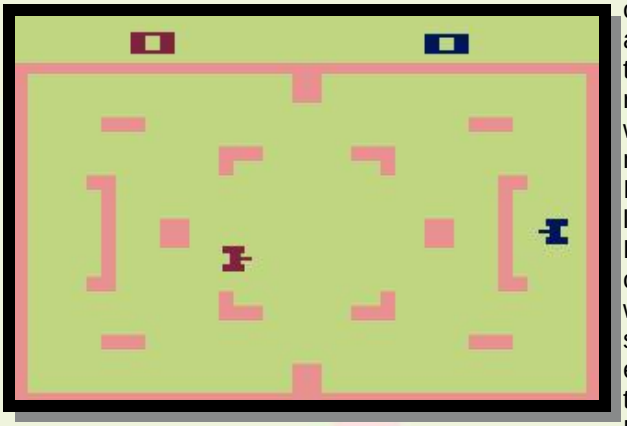
Overall Rating: A-

For most of us, Combat was our introduction to the Atari VCS. After what seemed like an eternity of having your dad set up the system to the back of the TV set, we inserted the cartridge, flipped the power switch and were treated to the image of two tanks on either side of the screen poised for battle. After the reset button was pressed, you and your challenger charged at each other with bullets flying. From this point forward we knew we were hooked.

Combat is still an outstanding two-player game. What it lacks in graphics is more than made up for in game play. There are many tank and fighter plane game variations to keep even the most jaded classic gamer happy. There are tank battles on empty battlefields and mazed battlefields, invisible tanks, and tanks with bouncing bullets (knowing geometry seems to pay off in this one). The fighter plane variations include standard bi-plane dogfighting, jetfighters and the grossly unfair three small planes vs. the one large plane (which seems totally incapable of mounting any significant attack against the three smaller ones).

Although these are all strictly two player games, who doesn't remember wanting to play so badly that you would go at it alone anyway and experience considerable glee in destroying the unmanned aircraft and tanks? Besides, when else were you going to practice your bankshots?

There are a few bugs in this game (which enhance game play) such as being able to 'warp' yourself to the other side of the battlefield. You can accomplish this with a little practice by placing your tank in a corner of the maze, turning your joystick and moving forward at the same time. You'll find this maneuver comes in handy for surprise attacks.



Combat

Combat was originally planned to be built into the VCS. If you look inside the original six-switch model you will see a spot on the motherboard to hold the Combat ROM chip. For reasons unknown this idea was abandoned and the cartridge came included with the system. We don't recommend you install the Combat ROM yourself as we've heard this can fry your unit.

A sequel, "Combat II", was planned but never released.

Update! An incomplete Combat II prototype was discovered by The Atari Gaming Headquarters. Screenshots are available at their website: www.atarihq.co

GORF

CBS/Atari VCS (2600)
Released: 1982
Reviewed by Kyle Snyder

Overall Rating: B

Some of the most successful arcade games from the first wave of video gaming were of the "slide and shoot" variety. The idea was to move a laser bunker from left to right on the bottom of the screen while firing upwards at targets. The most famous of course, is Space Invaders, which later begat games like Galaxian, Galaga, Astro Fighter, and even Carnival. Some companies realized that the genre was getting rather overpopulated, so they released games with different and distinct qualities. One of the best of the group is Bally/Midway's arcade hit Gorf. This masterpiece features five different screens, four-way directional movement, and striking speech capabilities (for the era).

When CBS games licensed Gorf for the Atari 2600, certain liberties had to be taken with the game play in order for it to fit into a 4K cartridge. For instance, obviously the voice had to be scrapped but we accepted that. What is odd however, is that CBS reduced the player's spaceship to a simple left-

Gorf

and-right movement pattern, reducing the great fun of narrowly avoiding an alien's swooping attack while moving down and to the left.

As a result, the 2600 cartridge of Gorf plays very flat. However, CBS did duplicate some of the manic feel of the arcade game in the variety of the screens. The first screen is essentially a remake of Space Invaders with a much smaller army of aliens and plays virtually identical to the groundbreaking classic. The second screen features a tiny group of attackers with one laser cannon. But what a cannon it is! It fires a long, solid bolt of energy towards the player's ship and remains onscreen for a considerable amount of time. Once this force is destroyed, we are transported to the blackhole screen, wherein spaceships spiral from a central point at varying speeds and angles to attack the player. This screen is rather unique as the player does not have to destroy all the aliens to progress. If an alien is not destroyed, it flies out into the depths of space never to be seen again. The player simply has to survive until the end of the round. On the fourth and final round, the player is asked to defeat the Gorfian mothership. This monstrosity flies across the top of the screen, dropping yellow bombs. The only catch is that the ship's vulnerable point is a tiny vent on the underside of the ship. It takes quite a bit of skill to aim at such a small target, but when accomplished, the spaceship shimmers with different colors to indicate its destruction.

All things considered, CBS' Gorf for the VCS is not a bad version of the game, but then again, without the voice and the four way direction, it's not exactly Gorf.

Interesting side trivia: The arcade game's third screen is a remake of Galaxian. This screen was not included in the 2600 cart, not due to memory limitations, but due to legal constraints. Atari had already grabbed the licensing rights to Galaxian by this time, so to avoid copyright infringement, CBS omitted this screen from the home version.

Gorf

Oddly, if you play Galaxian (aka Galactic Invasion) for the Bally Astrocade, it plays and sounds exactly like the missing Gorf - Galaxian wave. I guess that's one way to have a complete Gorf!

River Raid

Activision/Atari VCS (2600)
Designed by Carol Shaw
Reviewed by Chris Lion

Overall Rating: B+

One of the more unique characteristics River Raid has compared to other videogames is that it is designed by a woman. I must admit when I first agreed to review this game my sexist side came out and I worried that there was some sort of voice chip installed. I half expected to find the game questioning my moves, wondering why I didn't refuel and telling me to JUST ASK FOR DIRECTIONS. I am pleased to report that no such chip exists.

River Raid

The skills required by River Raid do not just entail the typical hand/eye coordination, but tactical skills as well. The player navigates a jet plane over a constantly changing riverscape with much needed fuel stops becoming more scarce along the way. One may be good at blowing things up, but with poor planning, the jet may run out of fuel and crash.

The objective of the game is to fly up a river, destroying the enemy's bridges and fuel supplies. While the enemy may have ships, planes and helicopters along the route, the bridges and fuel supplies are the most valuable, and thus, carry the highest point value.

Overall, the game's graphics are nice. It is easy to discern not only what each target is, but also any obstacles around the fighter. The colors are simple; blue for water, green for land, and the ships and planes are obvious. The player is never left wondering, "What the heck is THAT?" In fact, I was always impressed by the clean look of the graphics.

One drawback with this game, as with most of its generation, is maneuverability. Control is limited to the very simple forward, right and left, leaving the player with a feeling of very little "real" control. Often, when I would veer off to avoid an object the plane seemed to keep drifting until I pulled back hard.

There are treats in this game that make it really fun. The fuel tanks are quite unique. If one blows up the tank, they are destroying their ability to refuel their plane. If one leaves the fuel, it is left for the enemy to supply themselves.

A great trick is what I dubbed the "gas and blast" - fueling up and then blowing up the tank. I got my much needed fuel, earned extra points and denied my enemy of fuel. It's a great trick, although it takes some practice to master.

Overall, I give River Raid a B+. It's a fun game with a clear objective and solid graphics. It plays well in a single player mode or against an adversary.

Lee's Classic Corner

CVG 101 - Classic Videogames in a Nutshell

CVG 101

by
Lee K. Seitz

Welcome to the first CVG 101 column. My name is Lee K. Seitz, and I've been actively collecting classic videogames since the late 1980s. The purpose of this column is to help educate newcomers to the hobby of collecting classic videogames. Each issue I'll choose a different topic to explain. I hope you find these columns both educational and entertaining. For my first column, I'm simply going to try to define many terms often used within the hobby while giving a brief history of home videogames.

If you're on the Internet, there's a Usenet newsgroup where collectors discuss classic video games. Its name is **rec.games.video.classic**, or **r.g.v.c** for short. If you're not familiar with newsgroups, I'm afraid it's too big a topic to go into detail here. Try a site like DejaNews (www.dejanews.com) or RemarQ (www.remarq.com). You'll see many of the terms I discuss here come up in the discussions in r.g.v.c.

First, let's cover the home video game systems of the classic age (roughly 1972-1984). You are probably familiar with some of the major systems of the time, particularly Atari's. The **Atari 2600** was first released as the **Atari Video Computer System (VCS)**. When Atari released its second programmable system, the **Atari 5200 Super System**, they went back and changed the VCS to the 2600. Atari later released the **Atari 7800 Pro System**, which could play both games designed for it and the 2600.

Although the Atari 2600 was the reigning champion of the classics, it was not the first console. That honor goes to the **Magnavox Odyssey**, released in 1972. It was a very simple system that played mainly pong-type games. It came with overlays to tape to the TV screen and numerous cards and game boards to help enhance it. Next came Atari's **Pong** for homes, based on their Pong **coin-op** (coin-operated) game. Its success spawned numerous imitators, notably Magnavox's **Odyssey** series and Coleco's **Telstar** series.

The first programmable console was the Fairchild **Channel F**, but the 2600 was released shortly thereafter, which took the lead. Once again, Atari's success created competitors. Magnavox's first truly programmable system, the **Odyssey^2**, was notable for its full keyboard. Toy company, Mattel, created the **Intellivision**, which upped the ante on graphics. Meanwhile, Milton Bradley bought out GCE (General Consumer Electronics) and released their **Vectrex.** The Vectrex is unique in that it is the only home game system to use **vector graphics**. Vector graphics are those found in arcade games like Asteroids and Tempest, where everything is drawn with straight

lines.

Finally, the technology ante was upped again, this time by Coleco with their **Colecovision**. Then came **The Crash**....The Crash was a period in 1983-84 in which the videogame market took a nosedive. This was caused by several factors, including a glut of sub-par games and the falling cost of home computers. Many video game companies went out of business during this time. Most collectors consider this the end of the classic era. It took a company new to the American home video game market to turn things around when they released the **Nintendo Entertainment System** (**NES**) in 1985.

As you can see, there are many "classic" systems out there. You might wonder where you can find them and their cartridges (**carts**, for short). There are several places. If you have a lot of time, but little money, search thrift stores (such as Value Village or those run by the Salvation Army or Goodwill), flea markets, and yard sales. Some collectors visit thrift stores so often that they've coined a word for the act of visiting several thrift stores around town: **thrifting**.

If, on the other hand, you have plenty of money, but not much time, you might try a classic video game dealer. Yes, there really are people who have made a business out of selling old video games. There are no national chains that do so, which makes finding them hard. On the bright side, most do their business via mail order throughout the country and many are based on the World Wide Web. Another option is Internet auction sites such as eBay (www.ebay.com) or Amazon (www.amazon.com).

Notice I made the distinction of time vs. money. That's because some items are rarer than others. For example, you'll have no problem finding an Atari 2600 and a dozen games, while finding a Vectrex with any games can be quite a feat. Some enterprising collectors have created **rarity lists** of the games for various systems. The first to do so was Craig Pell, who named the Atari 2600/7800 list **VGR** (Only he knows what that stands for). While the list is still around and often referred to, it has not been updated in quite some time so portions of it are outdated. Many lists use the same rarity ratings VGR created: **C** = common, **U** = uncommon, **R** = rare, **ER** = extremely rare, and **UR** = unbelievably rare. There is also an unofficial rating of **OC** (obnoxiously common) that people use in conversation to refer to Atari 2600 Combat and such.

A great way to get rarity lists for most classic systems is to buy the **Digital Press Classic Videogame Collector's Guide**, more commonly known as the **Digital Press Guide** or **DPG**. Digital Press (www.digitpress.com) is a fanzine dedicated to all home video game systems, old and new, with more emphasis on old. It rates games and hardware on a rarity scale of 1 (common) to 10 (practically unique). It covers most of the systems mentioned above from the Channel F to the NES. To obtain a copy send $20 (for U.S. and Canada; $30 elsewhere) to Joe Santulli at Digital Press, 44 Hunter Place, Pompton Lakes, NJ 07442.

You might wonder what kind of items get a rating of 10. Well, they're mostly **prototypes**. The term prototype is used to refer to pre-production cartridges, which fall into two categories. The first is a cartridge containing an **EPROM** (erasable, programmable read only memory) chip the programmer used to test his or her game on an actual console. In general, the programmer would erase and reuse a cartridge many times during the development process, so few of these exist. The more highly regarded ones are those that contain either a game with some differences from the commercially released version or a game that was never released at all. The second type is called "**lab loaners**." These were pre-production, but usually completed, games sent to magazines for review. Because of the lead time in publishing a magazine, game companies had to get the games to the reviewers early in order for the review to be published at the same time the game was released. These prototypes were supposed to be returned to the game company afterwards, but many were not. They generally have an official, yet generic label on them including the address to return them to.

An NTSC "Asterix" Lab-loaner

Finally, let me mention **holy grails**. These are the games or systems that collectors prize most of all. This is fairly subjective as not every collector considers the same game(s) to be their "holy grail."

One game many collectors desire is **Chase the Chuckwagon**. (In fact, some collectors use the phrase "**chasing the chuckwagon**" instead of "thrifting.") Chase the Chuckwagon is an Atari 2600 game that was only available by mail order from Purina if you collected enough proofs of purchase from their dog food products. Therefore, it's fairly rare. It's far from the rarest 2600 game, but has taken on a certain mystique among collectors. Good luck finding your own holy grails, whatever they may be.

CGM

How RARE do you like your cartridge?

A Guide to Rating Your Classic Collection

By Mike Genova

What defines a rare cartridge? All collectors have different interpretations of the word, but to me it has a simple meaning: "A cartridge that is harder to find than most carts." Here we'll examine the many factors that can make a cartridge rare. (Examples cited are for the Atari VCS/2600.)

1. Low Production Run/ Poor Sales - A good example of this would be the cartridge "The Music Machine." This cartridge was packaged with a record and "poor sales caused many of these to be recalled and destroyed" as quoted in the Digital Press Guide Fourth Edition (DPG). Also, if a game was distributed in isolated areas around the world, it may be a tough find.

2. Limited Availability - A game which was made available only through special offers or by joining a club. Some games made available these ways are: Quadrun, Crazy Climber, Atari Video Cube and Purina Foods' Chase the Chuckwagon. These factors make it less likely that you will ever find these carts in thrift shops or flea markets.

3. Prototypes - A prototype is defined as being a game which was never released or is still in its pre-production stages. Prototypes aren't generally fun to play because of bugs and glitches in the unfinished product, but would highlight anyone's videogame collection. Examples of prototypes include Grover's Music Maker and Dukes of Hazzard.

Of the games mentioned so far, I have yet to obtain one of them. This just goes to show that once you find a rare cartridge, you could possibly be holding a one of a kind in your hand. Who knows, ten years from now, you may have the only remaining, legitimate copy of that cartridge.

Next are definitions of the various types of rarity symbols classic gamers place on cartridges. They are listed from most common to most rare:

Common (C) - Common games, such as Missile Command, Pac-Man, Combat, Space Invaders, or Pitfall! were cartridges produced in large quantities and enjoyed mass distribution. You will most likely find plenty of these at various garage sale/thrift shop/flea markets runs.

Uncommon (U) - An uncommon game is slightly more rare than a common game, but can still be fairly easy to find. Examples are: Video Pinball, Food Fight, Brain Games, or Battlezone. You may have to look a bit harder, or pay slightly more money for these, but they can generally be found somewhere.

Rare (R) - A rare game isn't always what it seems to be. A rare game in one area may be an uncommon game in another. I suppose that could be said for all rarities, but "rare" is sometimes misinterpreted. Games such as Millipede, Othello, Video Checkers, or a Basic Programming cart are rare. These will be somewhat harder to find than commons and uncommons, but shouldn't take more than a few months to acquire. Most respectable collectors will have these for sale or for auction for fairly cheap prices, but that will vary from one dealer to the next.

Dukes of Hazzard Atari VCS

Extremely Rare (ER) - An extremely rare cart is one that most people will have some difficulty finding. Buying one on the Internet from a collector would not be the smartest idea because you will more than likely pay a substantial amount of money for it, or you will be forced to trade something of value from your own collection. Finding them at garage sales, thrift shops, flea markets, friends or second-hand stores would be less costly, but those tend to only have your average commons or uncommons. Extremely rare carts would include Crazy Climber, Chase the Chuckwagon, Pengo, Rubik's Cube, Pigs

in Space and BMX Airmaster.

Ultra Rare (UR) - An ultra rare cart is a one-of-a kind cart because it would more than likely lighten up anyone's collection if they traded for it. Don't count on finding one of these at a thrift shop because it probably won't happen. There's always the possibility, but don't get your hopes up. An ultra rare cart would be classified as a Swordquest: Waterworld, Fatal Run, or Motorodero.

Chase the Chuckwagon
Atari VCS

Never Released (NR) - This one is fairly self-explanatory. If a cart was never released it never hit the retail market, was either never completed, or was completed but exists in prototype form. A prototype generally has no labels and sometimes has the label "Lab Loaner" on the front of the cart. An example of a never released cart would be Qix, Preppie, Dreadnaught Factor, or Zenji.

Texas Chainsaw Massacre
Atari VCS

The A-Team
Atari VCS

Well, that pretty much rounds out this article about rarities. I hope you enjoyed it, and learned something as well. Just keep searching, and believe you can find even the rarest of carts!

Other System Rarities

Do you own any of these other rare classics? Check your attics and basements. On some of these only a few copies are known to exist.

Atari 5200

AE - Parker Brothers
Battlezone - Atari
Frisky Tom - Atari
Meteorites - Electra Concepts
Millipede - Atari

Intellivision

Crosswords - Mattel
Defender - INTV
Fathom - Imagic
Tutankham - Parker Brothers
Yogi's Frustration - Mattel

Colecovision

Dig Dug - Atarisoft
Illusions - Coleco
Jungle Hunt - Atarisoft
M*A*S*H - 20th Cent. Fox
Super Donkey Kong - Coleco

Vectrex

Dark Tower - GCE
Polar Rescue - GCE
Pole Position - GCE
Web Warp - Milton Bradley

Odyssey 2

Demon Attack - Imagic
Power Lords - NAP
Q*Bert - Parker Brothers
Killer Bees - NAP

Atari 2600

Tempest - Atari

Classic Trivia: DID YOU KNOW?

After Atari shipped its one millionth cartridge of Missile Command for the VCS, programmer Rob Fulop's bonus was a certificate for a complimentary holiday turkey at Safeway (which he still has to this day).

Electronic Entertainment Expo Special Report

Frankly, we couldn't believe our eyes. Last May when we attended the Electronic Entertainment Expo at the L.A. Convention Center, we never expected to see so much support given to the classic gaming scene.

Hasbro was there in full force showing off their latest and greatest Atari games including remakes of Q*Bert, Tetris, Missile Command and yes, even Pong.

Nintendo is continuing the Donkey Kong saga and is also taking a shot at updating Tetris for the N64.

Game.com is giving it another whirl with Frogger and Centipede, and Konami is releasing a disc for the PlayStation featuring a slew of lost classics including Time Pilot and Gyruss.

On the following pages are previews and reviews of the best classic related games we found at E3. The next 12 months certainly promises to be a great one for classic gaming enthusiasts.

Photo by Sarah Thomas

Pong

You're kidding, right?

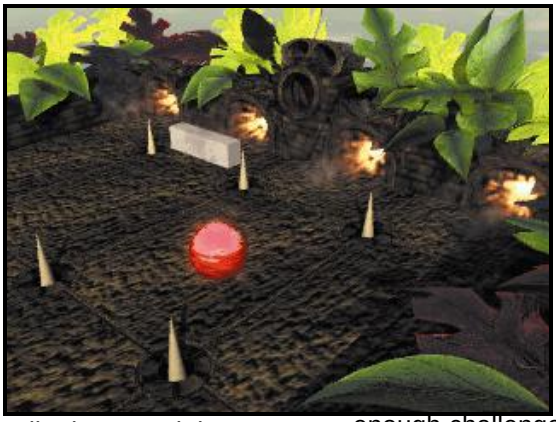
To be honest when we first heard that Pong was going to be remade we were more than a tad skeptical. I mean it seems kind of weird to update the most basic game of them all. We're glad to report that Hasbro Interactive has done an admirable job of bringing this moldy oldie up to date.

Gee, let me guess...it's in 3-D.

Well, yeah. But what classic update isn't? Hasbro definitely scores points for game board creativity. You can play in various arenas such as on ice, in the jungle and in space. All arenas have rich, vibrant colors as well as detailed graphics.

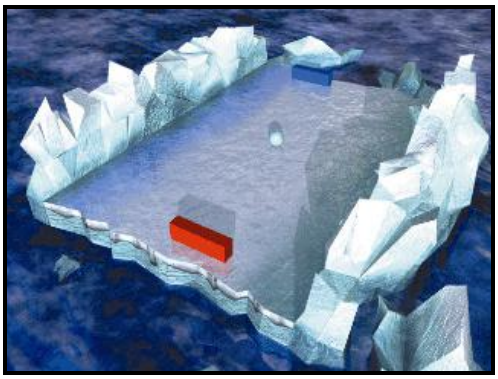
So, how does it play?

Quite well, in fact. It did take a little time to get used to the PlayStation controller to maneuver the paddle onscreen, but after a bit of practice we were doing a-ok (nothing, of course, will ever take the place of a trusty Atari paddle). Use of the dual shock controller improved the control significantly.



Numerous power-ups are available as well as constantly changing environments. In one arena, penguins march across center ice and if a penguin is struck it will alter the course of the ball. Also, the penguins will "lay eggs" which can produce multi-balls and paddle power-ups. In the jungle arena, spinning logs in the center constantly

change the physics of the ball, sometimes causing it to spin quickly back towards you or towards your opponent. The environments can change at the drop of a hat. At any moment, the board can convulse in waves, shoot spikes upwards, buckle violently, or take a dramatic 'tilt' in your favor.



Is it worth it?

We think so. With so much to see at E3 we found ourselves returning several times to the Hasbro booth to play Pong. It has more than enough features to hold our interest and enough challenges to keep it interesting and addicting. The mini-games within the game, such as a pinball level, are also fun and the multi-player mode (multi-tap required) will certainly bring out your competitive side.

The Skinny: Pong

Format: PC and PlayStation

Publisher: Hasbro-Interactive/Atari

Release: October 1999

Missile Command

More of the same?

In this version you get to choose between "classic mode" or an "enhanced mode." Either way, the objective is the same: Protect your six cities from the incoming alien missiles above.

3-D?

Why, yes, it is. How did you know? The graphics and sound are quite impressive, the missiles being launched from the ground are nicely detailed, and the resulting explosions are well animated.

So, how does it play?

Pretty much as you would expect as it has retained its basic game play. Beyond the addition of the upgraded graphics, there isn't much new material here. We played this demo on a PC and the mouse made it very easy to place accurate shots in the paths of the oncoming missiles.

Is it worth it?

If you like the original Missile Command then you'll like this version. The same elements are present as well as the expected weapon power-ups and the added ability to launch a counterstrike. Based on the demo, we would recommend it. Don't expect anything earth-shattering; just expect a Missile Command with impressive graphics and some nicely improved features.

The Skinny: Missile Command

Format: PC and PSX

Multiplayer over modem, LAN and the Internet

Publisher: Hasbro-Interactive/Atari

Release: November 1999

Price: $29.95 (PC) and $39.95(PSX)

Release: November 1999

The Skinny: Q*Bert

Format: PC and PlayStation

Publisher: Hasbro-Interactive/Atari

Release: November 1999

Price: $29.95 (PC), $39.95 (PSX)

Q*Bert

"Plot Does Matter" (Apparently)

In the Q*Bert "enhanced version" the wise ones at Hasbro have included a storyline as the framework to guide our hopping hero through his quest.

You must rescue Q*Bert's girlfriend, Q*Dina, from Coily who has brought her to the Q*Dimension.

The opening scenes of Q*Dina being kidnapped are humorous, entertaining and draw you into the game.

In addition to new characters and a newly invented plot, you are treated to six different dimensions with six different levels in each (not to mention the special secret levels and power-ups). Phew!

Drumroll please....

Wow! This one was fun and really impressive. The newly expanded worlds are amazing, yet the game play has stayed true to the original. The original characters Coily, Uggs, WrongWay, Slick and Sam are back, as well as newcomers Q*Dina and Q*Dirk.

For the purists out there, the original version is also readily available to play. The original arcade code has been used but it's been spruced up by adding a new 3-D engine. The sound, timing and characters are all here. It just looks a heck of a lot nicer.

So, how does it play?

Great! Again, the PlayStation controller takes a bit of getting used to with this game, but if it's held at a 3/4 angle it works just fine.

Yes, the spinning discs can still get you out of a jam, but you can still jump to your death with a poorly timed move.

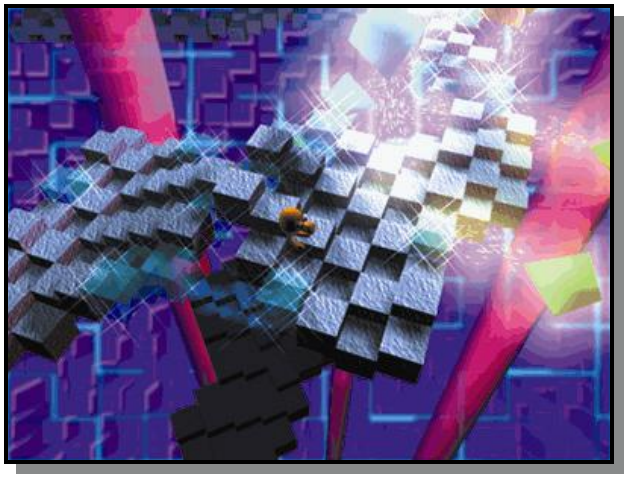
Is the added plot necessary? Of course not, but it did seem to add to the game as far as having a goal to achieve.

Is it worth it?

#%*? yeah! Then again, I've always been a sucker for Q*Bert. I think Hasbro hit a homerun with this title and it shows they are learning to keep the spirit of the game truer to the original while advancing the game play to the next level.

Q*Bert Facts and Trivia

- Q*Bert was inspired by the artwork of Dutch artist M.S. Escher.
- The two original titles for Q*Bert were "Snots and Boogers" and "@!#?@". The first was rejected for obvious reasons and the second was rejected because it was decided that no one would know how to pronounce it.
- Q*Bert has other enemies besides Ugg and Coily. He has an online hate page devoted to him at: http://www.free.cts.com/crash/m/mhpowell/qbert.html
- Pinball hardware was added to the arcade machines to generate the "KA-CHUNK" noise when Q*Bert falls off the pyramid.



Q*Bert in the Q*Dimension

Atari Arcade Hits 1

Not just another emulator!

We were able to get waist deep into the CD-Rom and have come out impressed. This CD features:

- Six arcade perfect (as well as graphically enhanced) games on one CD for the PC: Tempest, Missile Command, Super Breakout, Asteroids, Centipede and Pong.
- Archives. Included on the CD is a video interview with Nolan Bushnell as well as a gallery of rare game memorabilia.
- New levels on Tempest. What more needs to be said?
- The interface. The original screen artwork is included as a border to the game.
- Desktop themes. Cursors, backgrounds, screensavers - the works!
- Post your high score on the web. (For bragging rights, of course.)

So it looks good, then?

The various interfaces really give it an authentic look and feel. Graphically speaking, it's been emulated perfectly. The main menu makes it simple to choose between the different games as well as the regular or enhanced versions. Original cabinet title artwork is also included on the main screen. The enhanced versions contain simple graphical upgrades, such as a starry background for Asteroids, smoothed out mushrooms for Centipede, etc...

So, how does it play?

Quite well. The controls for one player games are easy to work using a combination of the mouse and keyboard. The controls for Tempest are nearly impossible to emulate, but we had somewhat better luck using a PC gamepad. The only complaint I have is that it's extremely difficult to maneuver the Pong paddle using the keyboard in a two player game. The precision just isn't there.

Is it worth it?

The games are arcade perfect and the new artwork lends a great touch. The desktop themes alone are worth the price. The "attract modes" serve as screensavers and you can switch between different themes at the click of the mouse. The fact Hasbro Interactive included them is proof enough to us that they seem to be "getting it". They appear to have a better grasp as to what the classic gaming enthusiast wants: not only the game, but also the story behind the game.

This is definitely a sign that Hasbro is beginning to understand the potential of their Atari properties.

The Skinny: Atari Arcade Hits 1

Format: PC

Publisher: Hasbro-Interactive/Atari

Release: Now available

Price: $29.95

Rating: A

The Next Tetris

The old standby...

Second to Pong, The Next Tetris was probably the most popular game at the Hasbro-Interactive booth. We wanted to hate it. We looked for reasons. The #1 reason being that Tetris has been done a thousand times over! But darn it, we like it.
A lot!

So, how does it play?

It's still just as addicting as it always has been, but the two player game is where it's at. The object is to eliminate the "junk blocks" on your screen before your opponent eliminates theirs or before your screen fills with Tetris pieces (called "topping out").

The Next Tetris

In the mix are the seven standard Tetris pieces, called Tetraminos, as well as the new Multiminos, which are constructed of two or more colors. If pieces of the same color touch they will "melt" together to form a larger piece. When a piece with mixed colors falls, it will break apart upon impact to fill any gaps below it, causing "cascades". Cascades will clear several rows at once. Clearing out two or more rows will send your opponent's game board spinning, giving them a few moments of disorientation. Cascade five or more lines and your opponent's board will spin, blackout and temporarily turn their blocks into solid gold pieces not allowing them to create their own cascades. This is what makes the competition fun and the game excel

So it looks good, then?

No, it looks great. The animations run at a screaming 60 frames per second which really show when you send your opponent's board spinning. Clearing rows will send the blocks exploding outwards.

It sounds great too! Catchy techno-tunes and Russian favorites have been added, but if you don't like those songs you can pop in your own CD to get you into the Tetris zone.

Is it worth it?

Tetris has always been an addicting game and a great time killer. With the newer features and updated graphics you can't go wrong. We guarantee you'll be playing the two-player version for hours.

The Skinny: The Next Tetris

Format: PlayStation and PC

Publisher: Hasbro-Interactive/Atari

Release: Now available (PSX) and October 99 (PC)

Price: $39.95 (PSX), $29.95 (PC)

Rating: A+

Donkey Kong 64

Looks like another Christmas hit for Nintendo

This title is sure to please any Donkey Kong enthusiast.

The demo we played displayed a full 3D explorable environment featuring exploding barrels, hand stomping, big jumps and a mini-game where you have to pound the bad guys in a maze within a certain amount of time. The demo, of course, only whetted our appetites for more.

The final version will be completely non-linear with fully explorable 3D environments (a la Zelda 64).

Players will choose between Donkey Kong or Diddy Kong as well as from new characters such as Tiny, Chunky and Lanky. You will be required to move all five characters down different paths through 8 different worlds competing in up to 40 mini-games.

How does it play?

It was all very similar to Super Mario 64 but with a more frenetic energy. Like “Mario,” the ability to explore wherever and whenever you like without time constraints is a big bonus.

There is the standard inclusion of hidden bonus stages and power-ups such as peanut pistols, pineapple launchers, and fruit grenades which keeps the game on a fun, lighthearted level.

Is it worth it?

Even if we said 'No,' you'd still buy it, right?

Donkey Kong is a franchise that has yet to be screwed up. Rare has too good a reputation to drop the ball on this one. This will be the hands down favorite of the Christmas season.

The Skinny: Donkey Kong 64

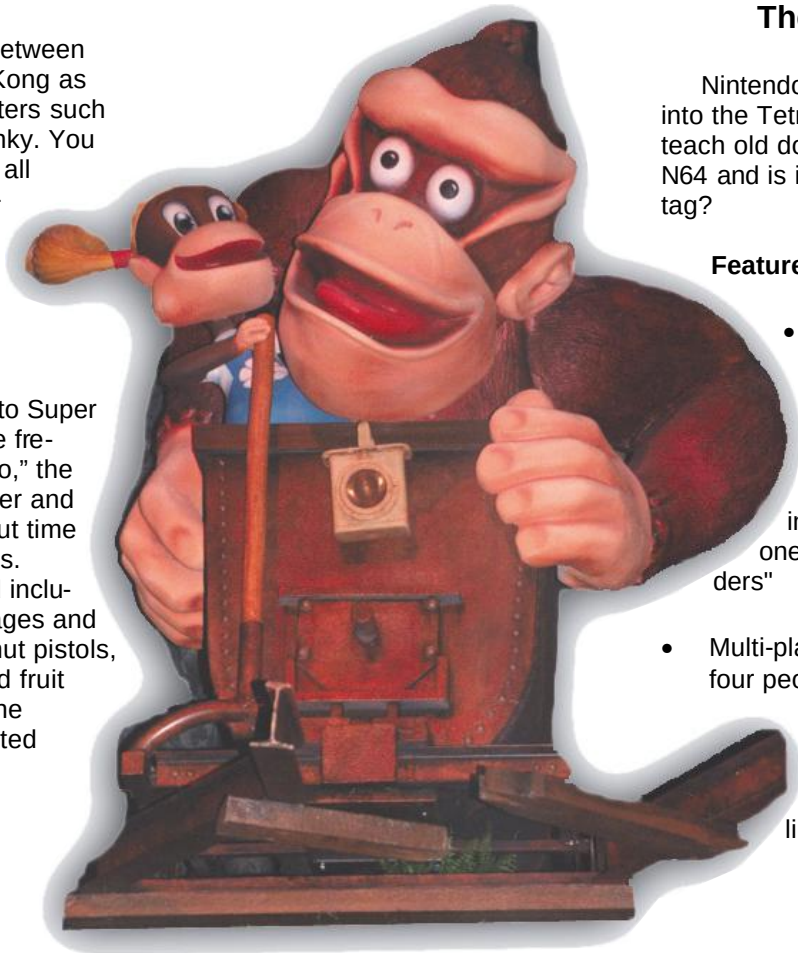
Format: Nintendo 64

Publisher: Nintendo

Developer: Rare

Release: November 22, 1999

Requirements: N64 Expansion Pak (included with game)



The New Tetris

Nintendo is throwing their hat into the Tetris ring again. Can they teach old dogs new tricks on the N64 and is it worth the $60 price tag?

Features include:

- 7 unique play environments such as Japan, Egypt, Greece and Russia
- Use building blocks in an attempt to create one of the "seven wonders"
- Multi-player action for up to four people. Players can screw their opponents by sending them "garbage" blocks which appear when lines have been cleared

The New Tetris

- Several play modes including: single, ultra (clear as many lines as possible), marathon, sprint (best score in three minutes) and vs. CPU

The Skinny: The New Tetris

Format: Nintendo 64

Publisher: Nintendo

Developer: H2O & Blue

Release: July 26, 1999

Price: $39.95

Nintendo "Dolphin" Project

In an attempt to steal the E3 show spotlight away from Sega and Sony, Nintendo released the details on their next generation game console.

The system, codenamed "Dolphin," will be powered by an IBM 400 MHz copper central processor codenamed "Gekko." It is designed to be the most powerful chip ever created for a home gaming console. Late reports indicate the Dolphin won't be blowing the PlayStation 2 out of the water but it will be just a bit more powerful.

The Gekko will be paired with a 3D graphics chip designed by ArtX, Inc. of Palo Alto, California.

Nintendo will also be ditching the cartridge format and incorporating cutting edge DVD technology, but they haven't revealed if you can watch DVD movies on it.

Apparently legendary game designer, Shigeru Miyamoto has been licking his chops at creating the next Zelda adventure for the new console. At E3 he said, "I'd always envisioned what a game like Zelda could look like, and with the N64 I was able to create it. Now, with the Gekko processor, I can see an opportunity to take game designs to a new level."

Another feature being touted by Nintendo is the ability to "counterfeit proof" their software. No details on this technology have been divulged but Nintendo's chairman, Howard Lincoln told Forbes Magazine, "By 'counterfeit-proof,' we mean to say that we will make it financially unfeasible for piracy rings to counterfeit Nintendo software."

Nintendo claims that the release of the new console is scheduled to coincide with the 2000 Christmas season, but don't hold your breath. You can probably expect its release sometime in 2001.

Nintendo "Dolphin" System Summary

CPU

- 400 MHz Clock Speed
- Semiconductor Process 0.18 micron Copper Technology
- IBM Gekko Processor

Graphics

- Custom Chip Designed by ArtX, Inc.
- 200 MHz Clock Speed
- Semiconductor Process 0.18 Embedded DRAM Technology

System Memory

- High speed DRAM Technology
- Memory Bandwidth 3.2 GB / second

Software Medium

- Matsushita Unique DVD Technology
- Enhanced Counterfeit Protection

Will Nintendo's "Dolphin" make leaps over the PlayStation 2 and the Dreamcast?

Game.com

Been there? Done that?

I never used to give much thought to Tiger's Game.com. To be honest, I thought Tiger had thrown in the towel with the idea. I had seen one too many units tossed into the bargain bin at Kay Bee Toys and even those didn't seem to sell. Since then it has come to be known as the "lame.com."

Tiger appears to be making a second run at it. They've lowered the retail price to $29.99 and have given the unit a cosmetic facelift featuring all new colors and a more compact design. That seems to be a good start. The second thing Tiger has going for them is that they have been bought by Hasbro. This, of course, gives them full access to the Hasbro/Atari line of games including Centipede and Frogger.

So it looks good, then?

The graphics look great and have a greater resolution than Nintendo's Game Boy, but unfortunately, they are still in black and white. (Tiger stated they have no immediate plans to incorporate color.)

How does it play?

We tested the demos of Centipede and Frogger.

We walked away from Frogger very impressed. The graphics were crisp and looked identical (sans color) to the arcade counterpart. The sound emanating from the unit was fantastic. The programmers did an admirable job of emulating the catchy Frogger tunes from the arcade version. Also included with Frogger is an "enhanced version" in 3-D. This was wholly unnecessary as the improved graphics added nothing to the gameplay.

Centipede was good, but far from perfect. You know exactly the reason why.....the controls. You just can't get the same precise movement from a gamepad that you can get from the trakball. Period. Is the expense so great that a small trakball can't be added? It can also be tough to play Centipede when the screen is wider than it is tall as the enemies seem to drop down a little quicker. Other than those beefs, the game itself played well.

Konami Classics

Is it worth it?

Included with the Game.com is a built-in data organizer, a fully functional calculator, an appointment book, a calendar and a standard 'solitaire' game. These features are a nice bonus, although I doubt you'll be dumping your Palm Pilot. Will they take down the Game Boy juggernaut? Of course not, but I don't think that's their intention. Tiger's target market is the casual gamer as opposed to the diehard gamer. The games we played seem to be intended as quick time killers and as "comfort games." Other games available include Monopoly, Scrabble, Duke Nukem and Metal Gear. Based on these improvements, we just may give Game.com a second look.

What's the real bottom line?

The bottom line is now that Hasbro has bought Tiger Electronics, they should ditch the Game.com and re-release The Lynx to compete against the Game Boy. The Lynx was Atari's answer to the handheld wars and had to be discontinued when they ran into their financial problems. Hasbro is sitting on a goldmine and they either don't realize it or they don't care. Let's hope someone at Hasbro digs through some Atari boxes and finds The Lynx. It's a unit whose time has definitely come.

Konami Classics

(Tentative Title)

Ten Games on one CD

In September Konami is re-issuing ten authentic arcade games for the Sony PlayStation.

Games:

- Time Pilot
- Scramble
- Super Cobra
- Pooyan
- Circus Charlie
- Yie Ar Kung Fu
- Shao Lin's Road
- Road Fighter
- Gyruss
- Roc'n'Rope

How does it play?

Based on our hands-on playtime and observations of other players, the games seemed exactly the same as their arcade counterparts.

All games will feature the original arcade artwork as well as the original bugs in the game. Now that's authentic!

The Skinny: Konami Classics

Format: PlayStation

Publisher: Konami

Release: Now Available

www.konami.com

Battlezone II

Based on the original Atari arcade hit, Activision is releasing a sequel to their hit, Battlezone.

Battlezone II

Features Include:

- Improved, easier to use interface
- More multi-player options
- Improved graphics
- Players will be able to command over 30 units, including tanks, infantry, air support and mobile assault turrets.
- Run night and day missions on six different worlds while utilizing 25 weapons, including guided missiles, mortars, mines and bazookas.

In other words, it will be nothing like the original Battlezone.

The Skinny: Battlezone II

Format: PC Win 95/98

Publisher: Activision

Release: Summer, 1999

www.activision.com

Space Invaders

Space Invaders? Again?

Yes. Again. We enjoyed the game on a graphics level. Of course the PC version's graphics (with graphic accelerator) was far superior over the PlayStation version. (We were unable to play the N64 version.)

Game Features:

- Ten 3D worlds
- New weapons
- Cut scenes
- Power-ups
- Twenty different enemies

How does it play?

Well, it basically plays like, well, Space Invaders. Aside from the updated graphics it retains the same game play: alien invaders descend while attempting to drop

Space Invaders

bombs on you. Tougher boss levels do tend to keep it somewhat interesting

I've never found Space Invaders to hold up well over time, but this seems to be a decent remake.

The Skinny: Space Invaders

Format: PC Win 95/98, PlayStation and Nintendo 64

Publisher: Activision

Developer: Z-Axis

Release: Fall, 1999

MSRP: $49.95 (PC Version)

Spider-Man

This is not your VCS Version

Unfortunately, we were only shown a running demo loop of Spider-Man, but were amazed by what we saw. A full 3D environment gives you the ability to make maximum use of Spider-Man's powers.

Villains? How about Venom, Doc Ock and Carnage. (What? No Hobgoblin?)

It's too bad we'll have to wait a year for it!

The Skinny: Spider-Man

Format: PlayStation & Nintendo 64

Publisher: Activision

Developer: Neversoft

Release: Spring 2000

Price: $49.95/PSX $59.95/N64

www.activision.com

Frank's Video-Pinball Palace

by Frank Traut

Midnight Magic - The game that brought it all back for me.

I remember when I first saw this game for the Atari 2600. It was on clearance at a video store in one of our local malls. Having played the game of the same name for the Apple back in the early 80's, I thought it would be fun, but I did not pick it up at that time as I was not yet aware of the classic video game collector that was brewing inside me.

Midnight Magic

It is now the late 80's and my Atari 2600 had been sitting in my closet for about 5 years. I was slowly becoming more interested in video gaming again thanks to a game called Alien Crush for the TurboGrafx-16. Alien Crush was the funkiest looking video pinball game I had ever seen, but the TG-16 was priced at $200 and came with a really lame game called "Keith Courage in Alpha Zones." At the time, I was starting a family and could not justify spending $200 + $60 just to play the latest and greatest video pinball game. So what did I do? I decided that my trusty old Atari 2600 should come out of hibernation. I had seen other games I liked sitting right next to Midnight Magic and snatched up the ones that I thought would be fun. At the prices they were selling them for, I couldn't go wrong, especially when you compared them to the prices of games for the current systems. I think I paid $1 each for Midnight Magic and Ghostbusters that day.

Long story short, I ended up treating myself to a TG-16 (with Alien Crush) later that year, but the whole ordeal got me back into classic gaming. As I snatched up countless games at closeout prices, I could not believe how cool the Atari 2600 had become. Games like Solaris, Gravitar and Defender II were incredible, but I wanted more. Since the Atari 2600 had turned out to be such a super machine, I figured that my next favorite system, the Intellivision, also had its share of super-hits. Of the games I found at thrift stores, etc., I discovered that there were plenty of excellent titles I never even knew existed. Stuff like Pac-Man, Donkey Kong Jr. and Pinball for the Intellivision had resurrected the video game player in me for good.

Pinball Construction Kit

Since it took a video-pinball game to get me back into the Atari 2600, I thought it would be appropriate to talk about my favorite past time in my first article.

Video-pinball games were the natural choice for someone like me who loved pinball but could not afford or did not have the room for very many of my own when I first moved out of my parents' home. You see, my Dad owned a pinball & videogame business when I was a tiny lad, so games were everywhere in the house and garage. All kinds of Pins and Vids were available to be played day in and day out. My brother and I literally grew up playing (and fixing) games, so it was only natural that I bring these things into my adult life.

Anyway, on to the reason I am writing: to bring you my perspective on the whole video-pinball gaming phenomenon. The first game I want to talk about is Midnight Magic for the Atari 2600. This game was first released for the Apple and Commodore computers by Broderbund back in the early 80's. Since I had both of these computers back then, I remember playing this game as if there were no other video games around (other than Lode Runner!). There was little difference between the Apple and the Commodore versions, so you can imagine my surprise when I first saw the 2600 version. What did they do to it?!? The front of the box showed what looked to be the computer version, but the back of

the box looked like they had 2600-ized it! Oh well, I was sure that it would still be a top notch game and I was right.

Midnight Magic was released by Atari in the late 80's as part of their new revitalizing campaign. Their marketing and their games were absolutely brilliant!

Even though the 2600 version of Midnight Magic is totally different from the same game for other systems, it is a hell of a lot of fun to play. The game features flippers, a few pop-bumpers, a couple of sling-shots and some rollovers. This pretty much covers the basics. Midnight Magic for the 2600 includes several other features which ups the ante for the makers of an exciting game. Not only are there two flippers at the bottom of the return lanes, there are also two more halfway up the playing field! They also threw in a spinner, a bank of drop-targets and one hell of a color palette that cycles when you multiply your bonus! This is one of the many features of the later Atari games that has to be seen to be believed. It seems the programmers threw in a little magic of their own for some of these games. The way that the ball behaves on the playfield is also testament to the programmers' ability. It bounces the way you would expect it to, and the flippers' interaction is pretty much right on. Control is very important in a game like this and Midnight Magic is by far the most realistic Pinball game for the 2600 - period.

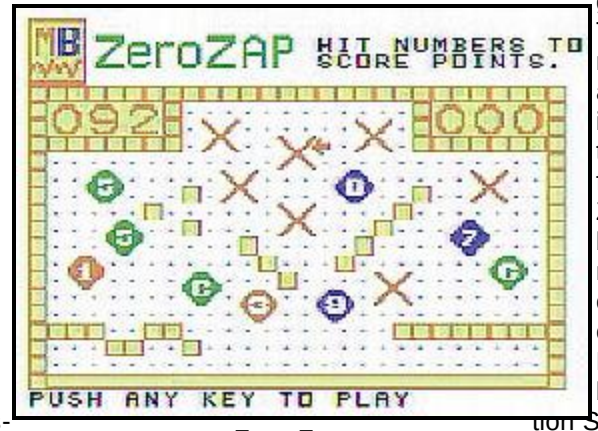
My overall score for 2600 Midnight Magic is 9 out of 10.

Bumper Bash is another Pinball game for the Atari 2600 and is one of the harder-to-find games for the system. This is truly a unique game because instead of utilizing the Atari joystick, you must plug in your paddle controllers!

SpectraVision realized that by pressing the buttons on your paddles, you are simulating what it would feel like if you were playing an actual Pinball machine.

Bumper Bash is pretty much a conventional Pinball game as it has all the makings of a good game. Two banks of drop-targets (one bank on each side of the screen), pop-bumpers, sling-shots, return lanes, rollovers and a spinner complement this game's features. What really makes it different from Midnight Magic are the lanes on the top of the screen. By rolling over a switch in between the three lanes, you highlight the letters 'A', 'C', 'E' - spelling ACE! Each time you spell ACE, you get rewarded with special bumpers which kick the ball back out of the lane that goes down to the out hole.

Video Pinball



Zero Zap

Now onto the gripe. Bumper Bash could have been a better game had the programmers put a little more thought into the physics of the ball. It bounces around erratically at times and does not behave properly when you hit it with the flippers, making your shots a little tougher than they need to be. Other than that the game is a blast to play.

My final score for Bumper Bash is 8 out of 10.

Video Pinball was Atari's first attempt at a pinball game for the 2600. Common sense should tell you that this game is primitive as hell. Basically, what we have here is a very slow and boring game. They tried to spice it up a bit by adding a couple of spinning disks on either side of the pop-bumpers, throwing your ball in all sorts of unpredictable directions. Pretty annoying if you ask me.

There was a game by Bally called 'Fireball' back in the early 70's which featured a spinning rubber mat that did the same thing and I believe Atari simply copied the idea for Video Pinball. Other than the spinning disks, you have a couple of pop-bumpers and lanes with rollovers, one of which has the Atari logo in the middle of it. That's it.

My final score for Video Pinball is 3 out of 10.

Moving on, we come across another lame Video-Pinball game. **Zero Zap** was for the TI 994/A home computer. I remember getting excited about this game when I saw it in a Triton catalog. Of course there were no pics, just a fancy worded ad that made Zero Zap sound like the next best thing to sex. What I really remember getting excited over was the fact that you could build your own tables! Remember kids, this is a little before EA's Pinball Construction Set.

In 1997 I finally landed myself a copy of this game. The person I got it from warned me and asked exactly why I wanted the game. I knew what he meant after just a few seconds of it booting up. What a horrible game! I am so glad I did not shell out my hard earned cash for this piece of garbage when it

was originally released. Really, it should not have been advertised as a regular pinball game as it is more like Japanese pinball: Pachinko. You all know what this is, right? For those who don't, Pachinko was a wall-mountable thing with a lot of nails and marbles. You flipped the "plunger" to shoot a marble out and hope to hell that it fell in the right hole. In fact, Zero Zap is Pachinko upside down!

Intellivision 'Pinball'

You start with the ball (really it's an arrow) at the bottom of the screen. After pressing "Enter," the arrow goes upwards and proceeds to bounce around the "playfield," hitting bumpers, walls and large "X's" for points. Real pinball games, even the vido-pinball's of the world are games of skill. Zero Zap is pure luck and utter garbage.

My final score for Zero Zap is 1 out of 10.

(It would have scored a 2, but since you can make your own "table," I deducted a point just because it's such a dumb feature for this game.)

Bumper Bash

Pinball for the Intellivision is a breath of fresh air! Seems the programmers had more than just a clue about pinball when they made this game. "Pinball" for the Intellivision came out the same year that "Video Pinball" came out for the 2600. If I were looking to get one of those systems back then and only had these two Pinball games to compare, I would have never chosen the Atari. "Pinball" has just about everything that any real pinball lover seeks in a game.

Its features include multiple flippers, drop-targets, pop-bumpers and underground lanes (in the form of your ball disappearing and reappearing out another hole).

"Pinball" for the Intellivision also features some of the better play mechanics found in a video-pinball game, and I am happy to report that even the interaction between the flippers and the ball is realistic (well, more realistic than others!). This is something that many programmers have had a tough time getting right.

Another neat feature (and a first) was the fact that Intellivision's "Pinball" has multiple screens! That's right, once you have hit certain targets a hole will pop up, and if you can get the ball in the hole, it will be taken to a totally different screen! There are a total of three different playing fields. Even though "Pinball" has the typical Intellivision clunky, lethargic feel, this game has it all. It is challenging, has great replay value, and sports some of the best, if not *the* best ball physics found in a classic system.

My final score for Intellivision's Pinball is 9.5 out of 10.

CGM

Microsoft Pinball Arcade

Got an itch to play a bit more "realistic" version of pinball on your computer? Microsoft's Pinball Arcade may be the ticket.

Microsoft has licensed seven classic pinball tables from Gottlieb and are replicated identically to their arcade counterparts.

The seven historic tables featured are:

Baffle Ball. The first pinball prototype. This machine utilizes no flippers.

Humpty Dumpty. The first pinball machine to feature flippers.

Knock Out. Features an animated boxing match on the playfield.

Slick Chick. Retro 60's style featuring pop bumpers.

Spirit of 76. A pinball tribute to American History.

Haunted House. First 3-level playfield.

Cue Ball Wizard. Features rounds and combo challenges to keep it interesting.

For more details go to:
www.microsoft.com/games/pinball

Level 2

An underdog in the arcade became a winner in the living room. Based on Universal's sleeper arcade game, Cosmic Avenger became a huge hit for the Colecovision. As with many of their arcade ports, Coleco took a chance in bringing this game to the home market. However, the gamble paid off and encouraged Coleco to go after more obscure, yet highly entertaining titles.

If you played this game often enough when it first came out, I'm sure you can still hum along with the opening theme fanfare when the game starts. While not an incredibly groundbreaking game it is very fun to play. It's quirky color scheme (purple, yellow and green!), creative sounds and crisp graphics make it one of the more unique and enduring classics.

Level 1

You assume the role of a space fighter who, judging by the game box's artwork, has the same tailor as Boba Fett. The first level consists of flying over heavily guarded domed cities on an alien planet. As you fire missiles and drop bombs on the cities, you must avoid the defensive battery of UFO missiles, land missiles and heat seeking rockets. On the second level ground tanks attempt to halt your progress by firing missiles. Finally, on the third, and most difficult level, you find yourself battling it out in an underwater cave avoiding torpedoes, mines and heat seeking rockets.

Level 3

I originally played Cosmic Avenger when it was first released and recall being perturbed by the fact that I was unable to blow up that annoying spotlight. To this day I still can't resist dropping a bomb on it and settling for a moral victory at best.

The transition between levels could have been smoother. One minute you're destroying the tanks and the next you're faced with a wall of water. Strange physics on this planet! The tank level is still the simplest of them all as it's only a matter of flying your ship at ground level and firing your missiles at the advancing tanks. Works like a charm every time.

We still recommend this game as long as the difficulty level is set to two or above. And if you are able to blow out that spotlight, please let us know!

Overall Rating: B

CGM

The Legend of BIRA BIRA

THE 23rd PSALM of BIRA BIRA

Bira Bira is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in thrift store bins; he leadeth me beside the piles of URs; he restoreth my Supercharger; he leadeth me in the path of functional 4k Rom dumps.

Yea, though I search through the bins of the shadow of Pac Man, I will fear no OCs; for thou art with me; thy Q-Bert Cubes and thy Cosmic Avenger they comfort me. Thou preparest an Atari 2600 for me in the presence of Mike N., Paul S., etc...; thou anointest my carts with isopropyl alcohol; my VGR list runneth over. Surely MagiCard and Tempest prototypes shall follow me all the days of my collecting; and I will Chase the Chuckwagon in the Reef Store of Bira Bira forever.

- Chris "Crackers" Cracknell

As collectors of classic videogames we know how frustrating it can be when we hit upon a dry period of finding classic cartridges and game systems. We know the feeling of wanting to spit nails when seeing the mother lode of rare cartridges walk off with somebody else at the local flea market. We've even gone as far as appealing to a higher power to end this rare cartridge drought. Apparently we've been appealing to the wrong higher power.

While visiting a thrift store outside Columbus, Ohio, collector Robert Batina found a carved wooden figure lying amongst a pile of rare Atari cartridges inside a Tupperware bowl. Being in a hurry, he grabbed the bowl of cartridges (including the wooden statue) and purchased its entire contents. When he searched the bowl he found several hard to find games for the Atari VCS: Brain Games, Strawberry Shortcake, Starmaster, MASH, Crypts of Chaos, Revenge of the Beefsteak Tomatoes, Commando Raid, and Miniature Golf. A good find, he thought. He also inspected the wooden figure more closely.

As Robert described it:

"It is about as wide as half the width of an Atari cart, and almost as tall as the length of 2 Atari carts. It is light wood, with a very dark stain applied to it, with carvings all over it, making it appear as some sort of warrior, with a large menacing face and an amulet. And, on the back of the figure, there is a carving that appears to say: "BIRA BIRA"

Not thinking too much of it at the time, Robert went to the next thrift store he regulars for classics and was dismayed to find that they had switched to ALL CLOTHING!

While lamenting his bad luck, he ventured on to the next thrift store. This time he remembered the wooden statue. He grabbed it, gave it a rub for good luck and entered the store. Jackpot! There he found a Channel F system with ten games - for only ten dollars! The powers of BIRA BIRA had been unleashed!

He scanned an image of BIRA BIRA, placed it on the Internet and asked people to explain what its origin might be (and to feel free to channel the powers of the wooden image in their quest for classic systems and games).

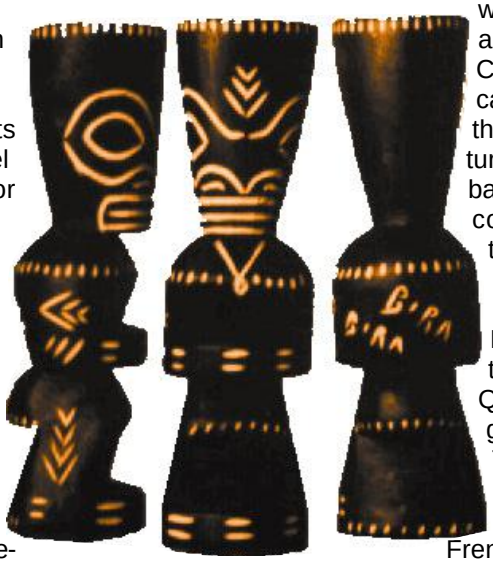
People did. And The Believers were rewarded. Collectors who used the image found new bounties of old video games. Vectrexes appeared where there were none before. XONOX Double Enders inventories grew exponentially and where there were droughts in thrift stores, it now rained Intellivisions. The Believers were happy. A small "church" (and cottage industry) was born.

Chris Cracknell borrowed the original BIRA BIRA statue from Robert and made plaster replicas (with instructions), which he now sells for $5.00 a pop. He has also written an original game for the Atari 2600 entitled "Rescue BIRA BIRA" (actually it's a modified version of an "X" rated game, "Jungle Fever") including original label artwork and an instruction manual. He's even seen fit to write a comic strip about BIRA BIRA and his arch

nemesis "Mr. Friendly."

Robert has also entered into the plaster BIRA BIRA market and he knows of a good place to get BIRA BIRA bumper stickers if you need such a thing.

While this statue (Saint BIRA?) has its Believers, some feel he may be satanic or of Voodoo origins, and perhaps people may be selling their souls for the sake of finding the rare cartridge and/or system. For the sake of fairness in reporting, I decided to try out the powers of BIRA BIRA myself. Being somewhat of a skeptic I have to admit that I didn't go so far as to actually purchase a plaster statue. I decided instead to wing it, as many others have, by chanting his name inside my car before entering thrift stores and flea markets. Yes, I felt a bit foolish.



BIRA BIRA Icon

My first stop was a thrift store that has been dry of cartridges and systems for about as long as I can remember. I asked BIRA BIRA to bless me with a good cartridge find. I figured this would be a true test due to the history of cartridge scarcity in this store. When I approached the bookshelf which held games I didn't notice anything. Feeling frustrated I was about to turn away and end the experiment when I noticed a stack of ColecoVision cartridges with their labels turned to the back. "Probably commons," I thought. I picked them up and found Looping, Victory, Popeye, Q* Bert, Frogger II: ThreeDeep, SubRoc, Mr. Do. and Frenzy. Pretty good for a drought!

When I arrived at the neighborhood Goodwill Store, I didn't find any cartridges but did find a hard to find Sears Tele-Games storage unit. Again, not bad. Perhaps there was something to this BIRA BIRA thing after all.

Then I hit another long period of not finding anything. However, I would be remiss in not pointing out that the dry spell didn't occur until after I had called upon BIRA BIRA to grant me the next lottery numbers. I figured, "What the hell? Let's really push these powers to their limits." If the Legend of BIRA BIRA is correct, then I was being punished for my greed. Like I said; a long dry spell hit.

After about a month of punishment I was once again blessed at a flea market with the reward of rare Intellivision cartridges. It was such a good haul that I swore off antagonizing BIRA BIRA for the latest lottery numbers. For now anyway.

So, is the Legend of BIRA BIRA fact or fiction? Are the followers of this idol being led astray? Will these Believers one day congregate at a commune in Sunnyvale, California with their leader Robert Batina (with BIRA BIRA in hand) encouraging them to ingest tainted Kool-AID Man cartridges? Is it possible that they could perish in bizarre surfing accidents while vacationing in Waikiki?

It's hard to say, really. What I do know is that I've found some pretty good cartridges of late. If that means I have to chant to a fictional Tiki god in my car then so be it. Just please don't call the police if you see me burning Combat cartridges on a pyre and dancing naked to appease the mighty BIRA BIRA!

Rescue BIRA BIRA

To visit the official BIRA BIRA website by Robert Battina, point your web browser to:

http://www.infinet.com/~rbatina/other/birabira.html

To receive more information about obtaining the "Rescue BIRA BIRA" game for your Atari 2600 point your web browser to:

http://www.angelfire.com/ma/hozervideo

Or visit the "Rescue BIRA BIRA" website at:

http://www.freenet.hamilton.on.ca/~ad329/birabin.html

CLASSIC EASTER EGGS

When Atari programmer Warren Robinett became irritated by the lack of credit given to him by Atari management, he decided to "give credit where credit is due" in a unique way. While programming "Adventure" for the Atari VCS he created a hidden room containing a sign which read, "Created by Warren Robinett." Little did he know it would become standard in videogame programming to create these hidden goodies.

Electronic Games Magazine was the first to coin the phrase "Easter Eggs" when referring to these hard to find items. We feel this tradition can be kept alive by our printing some old favorites as well as new ones. You never know what may still be out there!

Missile Command – Atari VCS/2600

Choose game number 13 and sit idly by while all six of your cities turn to rubble. We know it's difficult not to spring into defensive action but just let it happen!

After all your cities are destroyed and the wave is complete, programmer Rob Fulop's initials "RF" will appear where the far-right city once stood.

Asteroids – PlayStation

When the title screen with "Press Start" appears, press and hold down the "Select" button, then press the following buttons to play "Classic Asteroids":

Circle, Circle, Circle, Triangle, Square, Square, Circle.

Once you have "Classic Asteroids" running press the "Pause" button and press the following buttons in order:

Add one life: *Up, Down, Left, Right, Circle, Square, X, Triangle*

Add 99 lives: *Up, X, Down, Triangle, Left, Square, Right, Circle*

Invincibility: *Down, Down, Up, Up, Circle, Square, Triangle, Triangle*

The Legend of Zelda – NES

Get an all-new second quest after completing the first one.

Once you complete the game, enter the name "Zelda" at the "Character Name" screen and voila', an all new game!

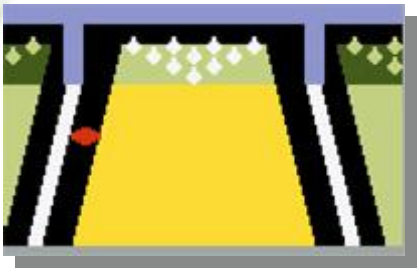
Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure – Sega Genesis

Play the original 2600 version on your Sega Genesis.

At the title screen, press "Down" and then press the "A" button 26 times (yes, 26!), then press "Down" again.

Carnival - Atari VCS/2600

As you turn on the system, keep the fire button pushed down. A dot will appear on the top row of targets. Quickly shoot the dot before it leaves the screen and the message, "Programmed by S. Kitchen" will appear.



PBA Bowling – Intellivision

Choose a 16 lb. ball, 0 slickness, a left-handed bowler, then press the disc at the 7 o'clock position. As the dot becomes whole, release the disc and score a strike every time! (Tip courtesy of *Intellivision Lives* CD-Rom.)

So, where's the "Adventure" Easter Egg we talked about earlier? Well, even though it's the first Easter Egg, it's still one of the most complex to find. We'll be devoting a larger space to "Adventure" in a future issue.

Have an Easter Egg or cheat code you want to share?

Send it on in and we'll print it here!

Mail to:
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Or e-mail it to us at:
cav@classicgamer.com

Reader Poll

Classic Gamer Magazine wants to be the best darned publication about classic gaming you can get your hands on. By letting us know what game systems you would like us to focus on and any other aspects of classic gaming you would like to see, we will be able to provide you with a more entertaining magazine. This will also let us know your all time favorite games, handhelds, systems, computer and arcade games. All responses are guaranteed confidential.

Please return this entire poll sheet (photocopies accepted) to: Classic Gamer Magazine 7770 Regents Road #113-293, San Diego, CA 92122 or e-mail your answers to: cav@classicgamer.com

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SEX: ___Male ___Female

AGE: _____

MARITAL STATUS: ___Single ___Married

HOUSEHOLD INCOME:

___Under $15,000 ___$15,000-$24,999

___$25,000 - $49,999

___$50,000 - $99,000 ___$100,000+

NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLD: _____

AGES: Jnder 2 ___3-5

___6-11 ___12-17

EDUCATION LEVEL:

___Some High School ___College Grad

___High School ___Graduate School

___Some College

Check off all gaming systems or equipment you own or plan to buy within the next 12 months

	Own	Plan to Buy		Own	Plan to Buy
Atari VCS/2600	___	___	Nintendo Gameboy	___	___
Arcadia/Starpath Supercharger	___	___	SuperNintendo	___	___
Intellivision	___	___	Nintendo 64	___	___
ColecoVision	___	___	Sony Playstation	___	___
Odyssey 2	___	___	Sega Master System	___	___
Atari 5200	___	___	Sega Genesis	___	___
Atari 7800	___	___	Sega Saturn	___	___
Atari Jaguar	___	___	Sega 32X	___	___
Atari Lynx	___	___	Atari 400/800	___	___
Nintendo 8 Bit (NES)	___	___	Apple II	___	___
IBM PC Compatible	___	___	Macintosh	___	___
Sega Dreamcast	___	___			

Other game systems, equipment, computers: _____

How Much Money Do You Spend Per Week on Video Games?

___Under $5 ___ $5-10 ___ $1-25 ___ $25-50 ___Over $50

How many people (besides you) will read this issue of Classic Gamer Magazine: _____

Your Top Three Favorite Videogame Cartridges Are: (Game and System)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Your Top Three Favorite Computer Games Are: (Game and System)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Your Top Three Favorite Arcade Coin-Ops Are: (Game)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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Atari Gaming Headquarters
http://www.atarihq.com

Keita Iida and crew has amassed an amazing amount of information for the "Atari Gaming Headquarters." Filled with pictures, interviews, system and cartridge information for everything Atari, including the Jaguar and Lynx. Keita and his staff leave no stone unturned and display their vast knowledge impressively. We give this site our highest recommendation.

I.C. When
http://www.icwhen.com

Atari alumnus, Don Thomas, keeps you posted on the latest classic gaming happenings. icwhen.com also features Don's online book, *The Chronological History of Video Games and Computers,* which takes you through a historical timeline of videogames from 1800 to the present. Definitely a must-read. There are also feature articles as well as a few games to play on the site.

The Blue Sky Rangers
http://www.makingit.com/bluesky/home.shtml

The Blue Sky Rangers were the programmers for the Mattel Intellivision and M Network games for the Atari VCS. Their site gives the inside scoop of what really happened back in "the days". Great stories, unreleased prototypes of hardware and software and the hype of what never came to exist are all here. You can also order the incredible "Intellivision Lives CD" from the site which gives you the ability to play most of the Intellivision games on your home computer.

Dave's Videogame Classics
http://davesclassics.warzone.com/

The emulator capital of the Internet. Every videogame system emulator you could possibly want is here for your Mac or PC. Download classic as well as newer system emulators. We highly recommend you download the MAME emulator (Multi Arcade Machine Emulator) which allows you to play arcade perfect versions of vintage games. You can also download older computer emulators such as the Apple II and the Atari 400 and 800. Chat rooms, message boards and utilities for the emulators round out an incredible site.

The Vectrex FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)
http://www.gamesdomain.com/games/vectrex.html

Maintained by Gregg Woodcock, it's everything you need to know about the Vectrex game system. Includes game list, repair tips and the history of our favorite tabletop. It doesn't appear to have been updated recently but then again it probably doesn't need to be!

The History of Home Videogames Homepage
http://videogames.org/

What this page lacks in style it makes up for in content. It's basically an interactive timeline where you can choose a year between 1972-1996 and find out what happened in videogame history during that era. If you do nothing else at least go to the site to view the picture of Sesame Street's Grover.

Tomorrow's Heroes
http://www.tomheroes.com

"Tomorrow's Heroes" has a tremendous classic gaming section which includes private party videogame ads, a chat room, collecting tips, and the wonderfully written "Retrogaming Times" online newsletter penned by site owner, Tom Zjaba. If you're into Spider-man and the likes, be sure to check out his comic book section as well.

AdventureVision.com

The Adventure Vision is a very unique cartridge-based handheld videogame unit which was sold in 1982. The website features screenshots, boxshots, sound and video files and roms to download. The odds of finding an Adventure Vision for yourself are slim to none, so do yourself a favor and visit Jeff Folejewski's Adventure Vision tribute page.

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CGM

Games That Go Bump In The Night

A Classic Gamer's Guide To The Best Scary Games

With the advent of Fall upon us, the appearance of ghosts, witches and vampires at our front doors is not too far in the distance. Yes, Halloween will soon be upon us once again. What better way to spend a Halloween's eve than curled up with your classic gaming system in a darkened room, playing a scary game while ignoring the cries of begging children? Pathetically enough, I can't think of any! So, Classic Gamer Magazine presents a list of some of the more popular scary games to get your adrenaline going on a cold, dark and rainy night. (We'll understand if you sleep with the light on and barricade the door with your cartridge collection after playing these.)

Haunted House

Haunted House for Atari VCS/2600.

This is still considered to be one of the best "atmosphere" games for the VCS. You play the part of explorer (shown as a pair of eyes) of an old haunted house (although, I seriously doubt there are any "new" haunted houses) and your task is to find the three pieces of an urn and bring them back to the front room without losing your nine lives. This is not really an easy task since most of the time spent in the house takes place shrouded in darkness. Your score is not based on points but on how few matches you use to light your way! Impeding your search are hairy tarantulas, a vampire bat and a ghost, all of whom seem pretty hell-bent on "scaring you to death." This results in a loss of one of your lives. What this game lacks in graphics it more than makes up for in sound. Wind, slamming doors, lightening and footsteps all add to a genuinely scary ambience. Play this one with the lights out and the volume high for maximum effect. We dare ya!

Smurf, Rescue From Gargamel's Castle for Colecovision.

Ok, so while we admit Smurfs aren't exactly horrifying (however, people who collect Smurf memorabilia are!) we give this game a few chill points based on the stalagmite caverns and the creepy interior of the castle. Your mission is to rescue cutesy Smurfette from the clutches of evil Gargamel (never seen) who has her held hostage (bondage-style) atop a giant skull inside his castle. This is a fairly important mission for the Smurfs since she *is* the only female Smurf and I'm sure they would like to guarantee the survival of their species for future generations (whatever species that may be). Along the way, your poor Smurf is attacked by crows, vampire bats and spiders which you must either duck or jump over to avoid.

Aside from its childish theme, this game is an appealing side-scroller. Crisp graphics and creative music (particularly in the castle) make this game an enduring winner.

Smurf Rescue

Dracula for Intellivision by Imagic.

One of the truly great games for the Intellivision, this unique game by Imagic boasts outstanding game play, great graphics and unique sounds for an underrated system. You play the role of Count Dracula, Lord of the Vampires. Your goal is to see how many London residents' necks you can bite before sunrise. Out to get you are police officers, armed with wooden stakes, who seem to take

advantage of the fact that they can simply throw stakes to kill you. You can always escape by turning into a bat, and we also encourage you to use this bat transformation technique to catch unsuspecting victims off guard. Once you've bitten your victims' necks, they transmute into zombies and you can send your new legion of the dead to exact revenge on the stake-wielding police. For a good old-fashioned thrill we recommend this one. Just be sure to have Drac in bed before dawn, ok?

Halloween and The Texas Chainsaw Massacre for the Atari VCS/2600 by Wizard Games.

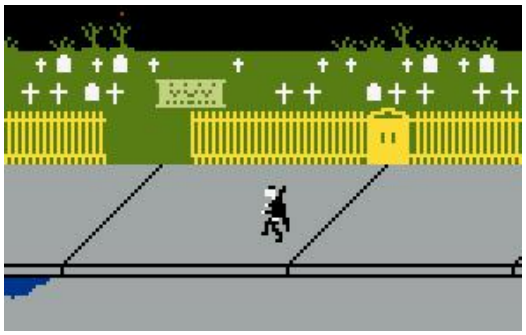
When Wizard released these games, it created quite a stink with parents which, of course, just made us kids want them all the more. In retrospect, it's comical to try and determine what the big deal was about these games. They both lack any real significant game play and the graphics are rather bland. However, gruesome stabbings and decapitations *do* seem to make a good selling point.

Halloween

Your job in Halloween is to play the role of babysitter and protect some children in a large, two-story house from the fatal intentions of a knife wielding Michael Myers (not of Austin Powers fame). You have to first locate the children (who are hiding) and corral them into "safe rooms" at either end of the house. (Why these rooms are "safe", I'm not too sure but I heard it's where the PMRC takes shelter.) You, in turn, have to avoid the maniacal stabbings of Mr. Myers who seems to supernaturally (illogically) pop out of nowhere. However, you can turn the tables and stab the unwanted homicidal lunatic intruder when you find the knife which lays randomly around the house. You are rewarded points for every child you deliver unharmed to the "safe rooms." This game at the very least gets an honorable mention for the eerie music which accompanies it.

Ghost Manor
The ghost of Jerry Garcia attacks!

In **The Texas Chainsaw Massacre** you get to be the chainsaw toting Leatherface. For some reason (you had a bad childhood, I would imagine) you chase down victims through a field and when you manage to catch up to them, you proceed to mangle their bodies with your Craftsman® power tool. What stands in the way between frustration and the simple glee of churning human torsos to your heart's content, are cow skulls, fences, thickets and wheelchairs. It is also imperative that you ration your chainsaw's gas for maximum decapitation enjoyment. You earn 1000 points for each victim and a fresh supply of gasoline every 5000 points. Overall, this is a fun yet pointless game to play in order to kill some time. So to speak.



Dracula

While both of these games have violent themes, the graphics are hardly what you would call "graphic." But Wizard was the true pioneer in what would later become standard gore in video games.

Ghost Manor for the Atari VCS/2600 by Xonox.

A few unique characteristics stand out in this game. The first thing you'll notice is it's one of the "Double-Ender" cartridges put out by Xonox. (On the other end of the cartridge, you'll find a game called "Spike's Peak".) Another unique trait is found in the game play. Before playing the game, you are able to choose if you would like to play the boy or girl character. Role choosing in gaming was pretty much unheard of at this point.

The object is to rescue your friend from the evil castle of Dracula AND find your way back out within a certain timeframe. This is also unique since most games of this time period ended when you reached the goal of rescuing the damsel in distress. (I mean, what exactly *did* happen after Mario rescued the girl from Donkey Kong?) This game has five levels of challenging fun and is appropriate for a scare-themed evening. However, when you look at the "Rainbow Ghost" you have to wonder what exactly the programmer was smoking.

Pac-Man (for various systems) Yeah, so it doesn't make your hair stand on end. We know that. But you DO get chased by ghosts! And that should count for something, don't you think?

Happy Halloween!

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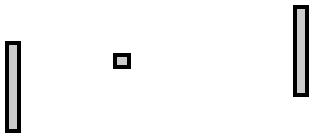
DEEP THAW

by Chris Lion

"My Nemesis"



When I was in high school, the only friend of mine who had an Atari videogame was Rosalind Goldberg. Roz, as we called her, was from a family that not only owned the most ultimate high tech video game player available—the Atari 2600—but also had a home computer! They were the first on the block to own a real life home computer - an Apple II. The Goldbergs kicked ass.

I spent almost all my free time, with 4 other neighbors, at the Goldbergs, waiting for my chance to play a videogame. My favorite was Super Breakout. I loved the rainbow bright colors shimmering on the Trinitron and the goofy little noises it made. Plus, it was reminiscent of the first (and yes still my favorite) videogame: Pong. There was only one problem when I played: I sucked.

I could not hit that ball with the paddle for my life! The Goldbergs (being such fair people) made sure everyone got a turn until they lost. For me that was about 2 seconds and was usually to Rosalind's mom, Gladys. Suffice to say that every afternoon I would wait an hour for a chance to play, only to lose to a 53 year old woman who was suffering the ravages of menopause. She was not what one would call a "gracious winner."

My friends didn't laugh at me too much because they were getting their asses kicked too. Roz, however did manage to laugh at us...a lot. Mrs. Goldberg felt it was her place to mock us endlessly. She would always say, "No hard feelings, right?" This was after crushing the ego of a 15 year old boy.

It was not until Rosalind was leaving for college that she finally told me why her mom played so well. The woman slept only 4 hours a night and spent all of her free time playing videogames! For every second I struggled to get the paddle to hit the ball, Mrs. G had 3 hours of solid playing time. That old bag (no hard feelings, right Mrs. G?) had set us up. Once Roz left town, I figured I would never play video games again.

Then fate stepped in.

A dear friend had heard me boasting about how "I could have been a contender," far too many times and so, he proceeded to present me with a pristine condition Atari 2600, several cartridges and a cartridge storage case (in smoke). Amongst the collection of games lay my teenage nemesis: Super Breakout.

I glared at the black plastic cartridge with its simple text and colorful graphics that looked nothing like the game and hissed, "We meet again."

With its faux wood grain finish and easy to use levers, I admired the sleek lines of the 2600. I let my hand slide gently over the contact paper finish of the wood grain, my fingers gently fondling the six levers. Taking the cartridge out of the plastic holding case ("holds up to 16 games!"), I inserted Super Breakout. As I picked up the paddles my heart began to race; my palms began to sweat. Suddenly, I felt a calm envelope me and confidence filled my soul with an inner peace I had not felt in years. I pressed start and began to play. I promptly missed the damn ball three times in a row.

Trying again, I clicked "start" and again missed the ball. My second ball shot out from its hiding place and slowly drifted down to my awaiting paddle. Just before the ball hit my paddle, I thought to myself, "Is the paddle working? Better check!" and whiffed it again.

On the third try, I hit it! Man, I smacked it! I punched it good! Maybe not "punched," but it did lightly bounce off my paddle. I felt the raw energy just smacking something, even if it was only virtually. I felt electricity surge through me as the ball gently smacked a green square and make a cute little "bloop" sound. As the ball gently drifted down to my awaiting paddle, I again felt the surge of confidence. Naturally, I missed it.

However, the fact that I had made my first shot filled me with a new sense of well being. No, not well being…more like a sense of immense power! Like greased lightening, my hand smacked the reset button and I began to play again.

Like a blur, my hands were frantically spinning the paddle around as I did battle with "the wall." Each bing, blip and bloop the game emitted filled me with a desire to continue.

Finally, at 4:00 AM, after 10 hours of continuous play, with my hands tired and my eyes red and bloodshot, I put the paddle down. While I never managed to get the entire wall to disappear, I feel that I grew a lot that day. I faced an old challenge head on and emerged with sore fingers and a personal high score (187).

In my heart of hearts, I know

(Continued on page 50)

Deep Thaw *(Continued from page 49)*

that one day I will take my place among the stellar champions of Atari and Atari compatible games throughout the world. I am now anxious to start on some other games that I could not master in my youth, like Adventure and River Raid. I will report on my growth and progress, both as a human being and as a future Atari 2600 champion.

As for Mrs. Goldberg, hear this: "I'm coming for you bitch! I'm gonna tear your heart out with a spoon, you old hag. No hard feelings, *right?"*

CGM

Special Thanks for Making This Issue Possible…

Bill and Carol Cavanaugh, John and Jean Thomas, Ty Cavanaugh, Shawn Cavanaugh, Cindy Cavanaugh, Philip and Annabelle Thomas, David and Judy Shapiro, Eric and Lory Nagel, Chip and Ann Pieper, Alex Bilstein, Don Thomas, Ryan Allshouse, Terri Ann Minichiello, Jayson Hill, Leonard Herman, Frank Traut, Lee Seitz, Patrick Wong, Jason Walker, Chris Lion, Keita Iida, Darryl Guenther, Sean Kelly, Kyle Snyder, Mike Genova, Damien Quicksilver, and Boo Boo the cat.

Atari 5200 (*Continued from page 15)*

It lacked both the game play and the voice synthesis the arcade game featured. Wizard of Wor looked the same as the 2600 version. Surely the 5200 can do a better version of Wizard of Wor than the 2600! They looked almost identical.

Other disastrous conversions: Sega's Congo Bongo and Buck Rogers both lack some boards from the arcade classics.

There were some splendid third party titles as well. Fox's Blue Print and Parker Brothers' Mr. Do's Castle were well done. After their other disastrous attempts these stood out.

Some mediocre titles included Atari's Defender, Pole Position and Qix; fun to play but far from their arcade counterparts. Surprisingly Atari left out the voice synthesis in their conversion of Pole Position even though the 5200 was capable of it.

While the term "State of the Art" is generally regarded as marketing hype (much like Sega's "Blast Processing") it was the proper phrase when marketing the Atari 5200. The Atari 5200 definitely set the standard for all future "State of the Art" systems.

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www.angelfire.com/ma/hozervideo

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Pac-Man Fever CD
www.bucknergarcia.com

The Q*Bert Hate Page
www.free.cts.com/crash/m/mhpowell/qbert.html

"Rescue Bira Bira" Site
www.freenet.hamilton.on.ca/~ad329/birabin.html

Songbird Productions
http://songbird.atari.org

Tomorrow's Heroes
www.tomheroes.com

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www.gamesdomain.com/games/vectrex.html

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